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Ecofeminist Practice and Theory: The Empowerment of Women in Kenya, India and the United States

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**ECOFEMINIST PRACTICE AND THEORY:
THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN
KENYA, INDIA AND THE UNITED STATES**

by

LATISHA ANN CAMPBELL, B.A.

THESIS

**Presented to the Graduate Faculty of
Incarnate Word College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

MASTER OF ARTS

May 1994

ECOFEMINIST PRACTICE AND THEORY:
THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN
KENYA, INDIA AND THE UNITED STATES

A Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

Ecofeminist Practice and Theory: The Empowerment of Women in Kenya, India and the United States

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This thesis demonstrates that ecofeminism is a new feminist theory and discusses the implications of ecofeminism's rejection of dualistic thinking. It also explores the relationship of ecofeminist theory and practice to women's empowerment.

Chapter One defines feminism and ecofeminism and determines the place of ecofeminism in relation to existing feminist theories.

Chapter Two describes three women's environmental movements, the Green Belt Movement of Kenya, the Chipko movement of India and the Women's Pentagon Actions in the United States. Chapter Three discusses the contributions to ecofeminist theory of Wangari Maathai, Vandana Shiva and Ynestra King. Each of these women is associated with one of the movements described in Chapter Two. Chapters Two and Three reflect on the contributions of these movements and theories to the empowerment of women.

Chapter Four examines the implications of ecofeminism's rejection of dualism and expands on the understanding of ecofeminism as a theory that challenges all oppression. It discusses specific actions called for by ecofeminism and imagines how an ecofeminist world might look.

This thesis concludes that women can empower themselves through movements against oppression that do not focus specifically on women's rights, women's roles or women's culture. It also concludes that ecofeminist theory has the potential to be more sustainable and inclusive than other feminist theories and urges proponents of those theories to contribute to and accept ecofeminism.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Feminism and Ecofeminism	9
Chapter Two: Women Acting on their Ecological Concerns	27
Part One: The Green Belt Movement of Kenya	30
Part Two: The Chipko Movement in India	39
Part Three: The Women's Pentagon Action Movement in the United States	50
Part Four: Observations	65
Chapter Three: Women Thinking about Women and Nature	68
Part One: Wangari Maathai	70
Part Two: Vandana Shiva	76
Part Three: Ynestra King	87
Part Four: Observations	95
Chapter Four: The Ecofeminist Alternative	98
Endings and Beginnings	117
Notes for Chapter One	120
Notes for Chapter Two	123
Notes for Chapter Three	131
Notes for Chapter Four	137
Bibliography	138
Appendix A: Green Belt Movement Time Line	145
Appendix B: Chipko Time Line	146
<i>Vita</i>	148

INTRODUCTION

Background

There's a hole in the ozone layer. I'm afraid to walk alone at night because I'm a woman. I turn on the news to hear that African-Americans hate Jews, Hispanics hate African-Americans, and another child has been killed in a drive-by shooting. Meanwhile I enjoy the special benefits of being white and middle-class. Corporations clear-cut forests in Latin America, displacing indigenous peoples and threatening bio-diversity, to furnish my living room or provide me with fast food. I'm twenty-seven years old, which means I'm a member of a generation known for its apathy--or is it hopelessness?

Women my age don't tend to call themselves feminists. They say that we already have equality, or they say feminism is too radical. But maybe they just don't see how feminism has anything to do with their lives. After all, we're all wrapped up in our own lives: young mothers struggling alone to make ends meet; career women, with more opportunities than their older sisters, climbing the ladder but too far away from the glass ceiling to worry about it yet; or just hopeless, "I can't make a difference, so why try?"

Of course, there are some women and men in my generation like me. Aware. Concerned. Hopeful enough to try to change ourselves and our world. But even we don't primarily think of ourselves as feminist. Sexism is only one of the things we worry about, and it doesn't seem to belong ahead or behind our concerns about racism, capitalism, materialism, neo-colonialism, poverty, homelessness, AIDS, heterosexism, ecological degradation, cultural annihilation, violence or famine. Nobody's convinced us that any of the traditional forms of feminism can help us sort through all these problems, and we're wary of any theory that asks us to recognize one oppression as more basic or important than the others.

Nonetheless, faced with a recent paradigm shift in my own life, I turned to feminism to help me sort through my concerns. I read an introduction to feminist theory. It helped a little. Following a hunch, I undertook an independent study on ecofeminism. Among the diverse and sometimes contradictory essays that I found in ecofeminist anthologies, I discovered a few theorists who shared my varied concerns, some inspirational stories of women taking action and some theoretical concepts that have helped me sort through all the oppressions that offend and frighten me. That independent study left me hungry to know more, so I chose ecofeminism as

the broad topic for this thesis. The sections below will introduce the purpose, assumptions, methodology and general content of this thesis.

Purpose

In this thesis I will demonstrate that ecofeminism is a feminist theory, just as liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, socialist feminism and radical feminism are feminist theories. I will explain why I believe that ecofeminist theory moves beyond the traditional feminist theories, even as it embraces many of the insights of those theories. In addition to discussing ecofeminist theory, I will explore ecofeminist practice and reflect on ecofeminist praxis, the dialectic relationship between ecofeminist theory and practice. Finally, I will expand upon the understanding of ecofeminism as a theory that rejects dualism and challenges all oppression, and I will explain why I believe that contemporary proponents of traditional feminist theories should critically examine ecofeminism, contribute to its theory and move toward accepting it as their own theory.

Assumptions

In this thesis, I make three assumptions. First, I believe that ecological degradation created by humans threatens the survival of the earth and its inhabitants. Second, I judge oppression as bad. Third, I assume that truth

can be found in the experience of women. In making this assumption I reject the definition of truth put forth by the scientific world view: only that which can be empirically proven is true. Instead, I believe that scientific objectivity, or the scientific world view, is only one way among many to understand our world.

Methodology

This is a theoretical and reflective thesis, built on reading and thinking. It emerges from my experience and my understanding of the experience of other women. It began during the summer of 1993 when I did an independent study on ecofeminism which gave me the opportunity to get an overview of ecofeminist theory. As I began to work on the thesis, I decided to choose four theorists and three examples or movements to form the basis of the thesis. I hoped to be able to examine the relationship between ecofeminist theory and practice.

I chose to study the theories of Carolyn Merchant, Karen Warren, Ynestra King, and Vandana Shiva. These theorists appealed to me for three reasons. First, unlike some other theorists, they did not assume that women are inherently closer to nature than men. Second, many of the concepts they presented pushed against the boundaries of my own thinking even as other

concepts "meshed" with my own experience, and third, they had published more extensively than other ecofeminists whose theories also appealed to me.

I decided to look at one movement in the United States and two in other countries. I chose the Chipko movement in India and the Green Belt Movement in Kenya because they seemed to be among the most documented movements of women acting on environmental concerns in countries other than the United States. Notably, many of the women participating in these two movements would not call themselves ecofeminists or even feminists. It is not my intention to put those labels on them but to use ecofeminism as a frame of reference that can help us understand how these women experience empowerment as they take actions to protect the earth and themselves. I chose to study the Women's Pentagon Action as the movement in the United States because in addition to being well documented, it was the earliest and largest example I could find of an action called ecofeminist by many of its participants.

As I read more about the theories and movements I wrote a short paper about each one. I approached each paper with specific questions. In writing about the theorists I asked: What is her vision or her definition of ecofeminism, and how does she see ecofeminism in relationship to other

forms of feminism? How does she deal with the problem of dualism? What does she bring to ecofeminism that is unique? I approached the movements with specific questions, too: What is the background and the story of this movement? What are its objectives, its methods, and results? Does it empower women? The subheadings of Chapters Two and Three reflect many of these questions.

As I read, wrote and thought, I discovered that Ynestra King and Vandana Shiva have even closer ties to the Women's Pentagon Action and the Chipko movement than I had imagined. My thesis director Dr. Dorothy A. Haecker suggested that I pull what theory I could out of Wangari Maathai's work on the Green Belt Movement. Relating these three theorists to the three movements made it possible for me to reflect on the relationship between theory and practice. It also gave the theories of Carolyn Merchant and Karen Warren, two of the theorists upon whom I originally planned to focus, a less prominent place in the thesis.

Meanwhile, I began to understand feminism--and ecofeminism--as a process of empowerment. I also developed a heightened awareness of the connections among the oppressions of nature and different groups of people and of the connections among various tools of oppression. With these

observations in mind and eight papers in hand, I began weaving together this thesis.

Overview

This introduction has outlined the basic background, purpose, assumptions and methodology behind this thesis. Chapter One will define the terms "feminism" and "ecofeminism" and discuss how different feminist theories view the connections between women and nature. In doing so it will demonstrate that ecofeminism is a new theory of feminism. Chapters Two and Three will explore three ecofeminist movements and three ecofeminist theorists, respectively. Each of the theorists has been active in one of the movements, and the movements are presented first to emphasize the fact that in each case, the bulk of the theorist's writing follows or is interspersed with her involvement in a movement. Chapter Two will explore the Green Belt Movement of Kenya, the Chipko movement in India and the Women's Pentagon Action movement in the United States. Chapter Three will discuss the theoretical work of Wangari Maathai, Vandana Shiva and Ynestra King, and it will provide an opportunity to reflect on the relationship between ecofeminist theory and practice. Chapter Four will discuss my own understanding of ecofeminist theory and expand upon the understanding of

ecofeminism as a theory that rejects dualism and challenges all oppression. It will demonstrate that ecofeminism is more inclusive and sustainable than other feminist theories, offer some cautions to ecofeminists and describe the actions called for by ecofeminist theory.

CHAPTER ONE

FEMINISM AND ECOFEMINISM

This chapter defines feminism as the empowerment of women and considers the possibility that ecofeminism is not a new theory of feminism but only a combination of traditional forms of feminist theory with environmental concern. It identifies the flaw in such an argument and demonstrates that ecofeminism is a unique feminist theory.

Feminism

Feminism is the empowerment of women, the whole process through which women empower themselves. I use the phrase "empower themselves" to emphasize that a woman must actively participate in her own empowerment. Empowerment is not a gift that one woman or group of women can give to another. But women can provide a context that will foster the efforts of other women who have decided to become empowered.

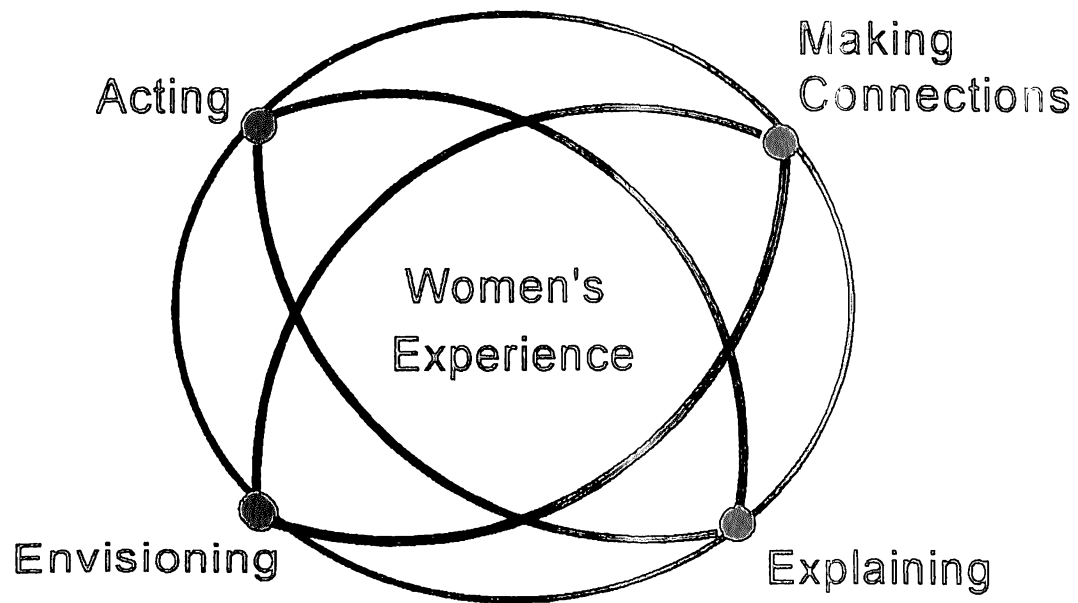
The process of empowerment involves making connections, explaining, envisioning and acting. "Making connections" means coming to new realizations about oneself, about how the world works and about how one relates to the world. Realizing that other women share the experience of oppression is an example of making a connection. This part of the process

might also be called naming a problem, and it includes first recognizing that a problem exists, then understanding the complexity of a problem and, finally, seeing how the problem relates to other issues of concern. "Explaining" means finding a way to understand the problem and the relationships identified when one makes connections. It seeks to determine why those relationships exist and how they work. "Envisioning" combines imagining and planning. To envision is to imagine how we can solve the problem that has been recognized and explained. We try to determine what will work and what will not, and we try to imagine what we can become, what we are working toward. "Envisioning" is also planning, naming objectives and determining the methods needed to achieve them. "Acting" uses those methods to achieve the objectives. "Acting" makes the vision real.

Making connections, explaining, and envisioning together might be called theory, and theory plus action equals praxis. Praxis, the dialectic relationship between theory and action, may take many forms, such as consciousness raising or organizing a movement, but it will lead toward empowerment. This process of empowerment can be diagrammed in a circle (see page 11)¹.

Feminism

is the



Empowerment

of

Women

We tend to think of this circle of empowerment as beginning at the point of "making connections," running clockwise, and ending at "acting." However, a circle has no beginning or end, and we must recognize that in some women's experience certain points of the circle may hold more significance than other points. Because of the different experiences of women and because the points of this circle are intimately related and are sometimes difficult to distinguish from one another, some women may feel that they move around the circle counter-clockwise or even across the circle.

For instance, often we make new connections that cannot be thoroughly understood through old explanations. The recognition that the old explanation has a shortcoming is a new connection, so we move counter-clockwise on the circle from "explaining" to "making connections." Then we move back to "explaining" where we seek a new way of understanding the newly recognized problem, and that new way of understanding leads to new visions and new actions. For example, noting that there is a link between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature is a new connection that cannot be thoroughly explained by traditional feminist theories. The recognition that traditional feminist theories fail to explain adequately this link is the new connection that moves us counter-clockwise on the circle from

"explaining" to "making connections." Now that this new connection has been made, we move back around the circle in a clockwise direction seeking new explanations, visions and actions.

The four feminist theories we know best in the United States, liberal, radical, Marxist and socialist, invite women into this process of empowerment. They all make the same initial connection: women are oppressed. But they explain the oppression of women in different ways, so their visions and calls to action are distinct.

These four feminist theories begin with the same question: What is the primary cause of the oppression of women? Liberal feminists respond that the primary cause of women's oppression is the separation of the public and private spheres. Radical feminists, on the other hand, believe that women's oppression is rooted in the patriarchal construction of gender. Marxist feminists claim that capitalism is the primary cause of the oppression of women: that gender, like race, is exploited by capitalism. Adding a more specific analysis of patriarchy to their understanding of capitalism, socialist feminists believe that capitalist patriarchy is the primary cause of oppression. Each form of feminism connects or explains women's oppression with a

different cause and claims that the eradication of that cause will end the oppression of women.²

Feminism and Environmental Concern

Carolyn Merchant, best known for her socialist feminist critique of the Scientific Revolution and the rise of capitalist industrialism in The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), does not understand ecofeminism as a new theory of feminism. Instead, she believes that different types of ecofeminism emerge from the different types of feminism. She identifies four kinds of ecofeminism: liberal, cultural, socialist and social.³

According to Merchant, liberal ecofeminism requires the participation of women in the management of natural resources and in the environmental sciences.⁴ Cultural ecofeminism emerges from cultural feminism, a movement indirectly related to radical feminist theory, which sees women as inherently better than men and seeks to create a separate women's culture. Cultural ecofeminists claim that women are closer to nature than men and celebrate this relationship, often by reviving goddess worship and ancient rituals.⁵

Socialist ecofeminists believe that environmental problems are rooted in capitalist patriarchy. They seek to build an egalitarian socialist state free of sexism, racism, violence and imperialism. Merchant prefers socialist ecofeminism which she claims offers the most empowerment to women who face multiple oppressions.⁶

The problem with Merchant's argument that a different type of ecofeminism emerges from each type of feminism becomes apparent when she discusses social ecofeminism. She says that social ecofeminism comes out of social ecology, an ecological theory promoted by Murray Bookchin that understands the oppression of nature to emerge from the human oppression of other humans.⁷ However, the statement that ecofeminism comes out of social ecology does not support Merchant's argument that ecofeminism exists only as an extension of the traditional forms of feminism. After all, there is no social feminism from which social ecofeminism can emerge.

Merchant would call women such as Ynestra King and Karen Warren social ecofeminists because their understanding of ecofeminist theory is informed by social ecology and because they cannot be categorized as liberal, socialist or cultural feminists or ecofeminists. But these women simply call

themselves ecofeminists. Unlike Merchant, they believe that ecofeminism is a new feminist theory.

King and Warren take three steps to come to this conclusion. First, they recognizing that the oppression of women and the oppression of nature are linked. Then they seek the cause of the oppression of women and nature, and find it in dualistic thinking about men and women, culture and nature. Finally, they observe that while traditional feminist theories recognize the problem of man/woman dualism, they do not reject culture/nature dualism.⁸ In other words, these ecofeminist theorists make a new connection and explain it in a new way. They begin with the question, "What is the primary cause of the oppression of women and nature?" and find the answer in dualism.

One might suggest that oppression may have existed before dualistic thinking and that dualism is only a rationalization of oppression. Nonetheless, at this point in our history dualism has become so entrenched in our way of thinking that it certainly lies behind the continuation of oppression. Furthermore, dualism lies behind the causes or explanations of women's oppression named by traditional feminist theories: separation of spheres, the patriarchal construction of gender and capitalism. Therefore, even if dualism

cannot be proven to be the original cause of oppression, it at least takes us one step beyond the causes of the oppression of women previously cited.

Ecofeminist theory is unique among feminist theories because it rejects culture/nature dualism and other feminist theories do not.⁹ The three steps taken to come to this conclusion will be discussed in greater detail in the section below called "Ecofeminism." Even though it is a new theory, ecofeminism does not reject the major insights of other feminist theories; it recognizes that the separation of spheres, the patriarchal construction of gender, and capitalism are all important tools of oppression.

Understood in this way, ecofeminism is clearly a new feminist theory. Carolyn Merchant overlooks this fact because when it comes to placing ecofeminism within the context of existing feminist theories, she fails to examine how traditional forms of feminism understand nature and the relationship between women and nature. This failure is curious because her own critique of science offers such important insights into the relationship between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature. But her failure to examine feminist theories in light of those insights causes Merchant's line of reasoning to demonstrate only that each form of traditional feminism can have environmental concerns, view them through the lenses of their

respective theories and act on them. She does not prove that ecofeminism exists only as an extension of traditional feminist theories.

Ecofeminism

Traditional feminist theories have noted the conceptual association of women with nature, the assumption that women are closer to nature than men, and usually identified it as a connection that must be severed. But ecofeminists recognize that the *oppression* of women and the *oppression* of nature are linked, and they take the oppression of nature as seriously as they take the oppression of women. Ecofeminists note that the daily activities of most women in the world--nursing, nurturing, gathering fuel and water, cooking, cleaning and farming--link them to nature and often cause them to be the first harmed by environmental degradation. On the other hand, the special relationship many women have with nature, because of the daily activities they perform, puts them in a unique position to teach the rest of us how to live with nature.

Having recognized a connection between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature, ecofeminists look for an explanation of why that connection exists. They find the answer in dualism. Dualism, a way of categorizing and understanding reality, involves four assumptions, each of the

last three depending upon the previous assumption. First, all things have separate essences. Second, all essences are arranged in dichotomies; all essences have mutually exclusive opposites. Third, those dichotomies are arranged in hierarchies in which one member of the dichotomy has greater inherent value than the other and the right to dominate the other. Fourth, when a variety of these hierarchies are considered, those essences with greater inherent value are associated with one another while those essences with lesser inherent value are mutually associated. These four assumptions can be referred to as the essentialist assumption, the dichotomous assumption, the hierarchical assumption and the associational assumption.¹⁰

Of course, no one I know is a pure dualistic thinker. For instance, nobody would take me seriously if I argued that tables have separate essences from chairs, are dichotomous to chairs, are inherently more valuable than chairs and therefore have the right to dominate chairs. The person pointing out the problems with my argument would find the idea that tables should dominate chairs rather ridiculous and note that tables and chairs are hardly "opposites" in the real sense of that term. She might even point out that while tables and chairs may have different essences--we can tell them apart--they are really very much alike. They are both furniture and they are

often made of the same material. Their essences seem to be overlapping, not separate.

Although none of us are pure dualistic thinkers, dualism is surprisingly pervasive in how we see our world. Dualisms common to our thought, especially in the West, are the dualisms of man/woman, culture/nature, white/black, rich/poor, spirit/matter, reason/emotion, good/evil. Remember, the four assumptions of dualism say that the members of these pairs have separate essences, that their essences are dichotomous, that one is more valuable than the other and has the right to dominate the other and that the more valuable essences such as man, culture, white, rich, spirit, reason and good are associated with one another while the essences of lesser value such as woman, nature, black, poor, matter, emotion, and evil are associated.

Ecofeminists are especially concerned with man/woman and nature/culture dualism. They reject three of the assumptions inherent in these dualisms: dichotomous, hierarchical and associational. While ecofeminists have not yet discussed whether men and women, nature and culture have the same, separate or overlapping essences, they do reject the notions that men and women, nature and culture, have mutually exclusive or opposite essences of differing value and that men and culture have the right to dominate women

and nature. Having dropped the dichotomous and hierarchical assumptions, ecofeminists find that there is no longer any reason to suppose that men are inherently more cultural than women or that women are inherently closer to nature than men. Instead, they recognize that the existence of culture depends on the existence of nature and that this link emphasizes the fact that men and women are both natural and cultural. Of course, dualistic thinking and the domination that comes with it have influenced the roles men and women play and the way they relate to nature. Therefore, while women are not inherently closer to nature than men, their activities may put them in closer contact with nature on a daily basis.

While many ecofeminists concentrate only on the problems of man/woman and culture/nature dualism, some recognize the problems of dualistic thinking in general. For example, Ynestra King mentions that racism and classism relate to dualistic thinking.¹¹ Karen Warren examines "oppressive conceptual frameworks" that involve dualistic thinking, and she understands ecofeminism to reject all forms of oppression.¹²

Ecofeminists such as King and Warren are moving toward a complete rejection of the basic assumptions of dualistic thinking. Ecofeminists take from ecology the recognition that all things are connected, and that diversity

of species and within species fosters survival. They seek a new understanding of diversity in unity that succumbs neither to fragmentation that makes unity invisible nor to generalization that makes diversity invisible. I believe that this appreciation of diversity in unity will bring ecofeminists to argue that things have different essences but that those essences overlap like intersecting circles in geometry which have many but not all points in common. In other words, ecofeminists will modify the essentialist assumption to suggest that essences share some aspects so that one essence cannot be wholly "other" or opposed to another.

This modification of the essentialist assumption removes the base upon which the dichotomous, hierarchical and associational assumptions are based. If all things have different, overlapping essences, they cannot be arranged in dichotomies or hierarchies. If they are not arranged in hierarchies, then there are no higher value or lower value members of the hierarchies to be associated with one another on the basis of their high or low value. I do not mean to suggest that no mutually exclusive or opposite *situations* exist or to ignore the fact that hierarchies exist in nature in the sense that some organisms are more complex than others and some animals eat others. This

type of hierarchy, however, does not connote difference in the inherent value of the organisms.¹³

Notably, rejecting these assumptions means rejecting the primary cause of--or rationalization of--domination and oppression. If I dominate or oppress that with which I have overlapping essences, then I harm myself. As ecofeminists come closer to a complete rejection of the dualistic thinking that underlies all forms of oppression, ecofeminism can become more inclusive of women of different races and classes who face multiple oppressions than other forms of feminism have been.

However, many ecofeminists do not have such a clear analysis of dualism; so, as stated above, the way most current ecofeminist theory differs from other feminist theory is in the rejection of culture/nature dualism. Liberal, radical, Marxist and socialist feminism all reject man/woman dualism, but none of these theories rejects culture/nature dualism.

Liberal feminists, and some radical feminists such as Shulamith Firestone and Sherry Ortner try to sever the conceptual association of women with nature. They assume that culture is better than nature and fear that the continuation of women's association with nature can only reinforce the oppression of women. Such an argument maintains the dualism that puts

culture above nature and aligns women with culture at the expense of nature.¹⁴

Rather than trying to sever the connection between women and nature, some radical feminists, Susan Griffin for example, explore it in detail. They believe that the historical identification of women with nature is potentially liberating.¹⁵ While these radical feminists shed light on the issue of culture/nature dualism, they do not reject it.

Like the other major feminist theories, Marxist and socialist feminism fail to move beyond culture/nature dualism. Like liberal feminism and one branch of radical feminism, they align women with culture in opposition to nature. The idea of dominating nature so that humans can be free and advance is as basic to Marxism and socialism as it is to the capitalism which they seek to modify. With the exception of Carolyn Merchant, Marxist and socialist feminists have not challenged this tenet.¹⁶

Although cultural feminism is more a movement than a theory, it calls for attention here because cultural feminism's celebration of an inherent or essential link between women and nature is too often mistaken for ecofeminism. Cultural feminism inverts both man/woman dualism and culture/nature dualism, elevating women and nature above men and

culture.¹⁷ Although cultural feminism celebrates a relationship between women and nature, it fails to adequately examine the connection between the oppression of both or to link that oppression to dualistic thinking. It maintains culture/nature dualism, aligning women with nature instead of culture.

Review

This chapter defined feminism as the empowerment of women and demonstrated that different theories of feminism enter the process of empowerment with different connections and explanations. It examined Carolyn Merchant's assertion that a different kind of ecofeminism emerges from each type of feminism, and rejected that argument on the grounds that Merchant notes the existence of what she calls social ecofeminism which does not emerge from a traditional feminist theory and that ecofeminist theory rejects culture/nature dualism while traditional feminist theories do not. To introduce ecofeminist theory, this chapter noted that the oppression of women and the oppression of nature are linked and that this link is rooted in dualistic thinking. After mentioning that some ecofeminist theorists are on the brink of completely rejecting dualistic thinking, this chapter concluded with a discussion of the failure of traditional feminist theories to reject culture/nature dualism.

Chapter Two will explore three movements in which women act on their environmental concerns. In doing so, it will offer further insight into how the daily activities of many women in the world link them to nature, and it will document the experiences of groups of women who have empowered themselves by struggling against environmental degradation. It builds on the observations in Chapter One that feminism--and ecofeminism--is the empowerment of women and that women's roles often bring them in closer contact with nature on a daily basis than men.

CHAPTER TWO

WOMEN ACTING ON THEIR ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS

The first three parts of this chapter describe three examples of women acting on their ecological concerns: the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, the Chipko movement in India, and the Women's Pentagon Actions in the United States. The story of each movement is preceded by a description of its background and followed by a discussion of its objectives, methods and results. Each part will include insight into how women's activities link them to the environment and will conclude with an examination of how the movement discussed empowers women. Part Four names some of the lessons feminists can learn from the three movements. Before we look at each story separately it is worthwhile to consider the relationship of the women who write about these movements to the movements themselves and the way those relationships shape what they write.

Wangari Maathai, founder and organizer of the Green Belt Movement (GBM), has written more about it than anyone else. Rather than telling a detailed story of the movement and its background, she delineates the objectives, methods and results of the GBM so that other women in other places can begin similar movements. Although she never speaks of

"ecofeminism" or "environmental feminism," she works daily to empower women and save Kenya's ecology.

Vandana Shiva and others who write about Chipko show a special interest in describing the background of the movement and telling the Chipko story in detail. This interest in the movement's background may be cultural, and it may relate to the fact that the movement has Gandhian roots. Shiva's interest in detailing the story comes from the fact that she grew up in the Himalayas and has a great respect for the women of Chipko, many of whom she knows personally. The writers of Chipko also emphasize how this movement came to be a vehicle for the empowerment of women. While most of the women of Chipko would probably not call themselves ecofeminists or feminists, Shiva calls others to an ecological, trans-gender feminism which she believes these women live daily.¹

While King and the other women who write about the Women's Pentagon Actions (WPA) do not give such attention to background, they--like the women of the Chipko movement--show special interest in telling the story of the WPA. But they focus on the story to emphasize the theory, process and symbolism behind the actions. The WPA clearly came out of a need to express the connections among feminism, ecology and anti-militarism.

Although not all WPA participants called themselves "ecofeminist," some did.

Today ecofeminists such as Ynestra King and women's historians such as Harriet Hyman Alonso recognize the WPA as a significant contributor to ecofeminism in the United States.²

Part One

The Green Belt Movement of Kenya

Background

In 1977 Wangari Maathai went to work with the National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK) as a member of its Executive Committee and its Standing Committee on Environment and Habitat. In this position she began to plant trees. The idea had been born in 1974 as part of a plan called Envirocare aimed at improving Nairobi's Langata community, and she gave the idea more serious attention in 1976 in Canada where she attended a United Nations Conference which focussed on improving human settlements.³

Maathai and the other members of the NCWK focussed on tree planting because it offered a solution to the specific problems challenging women and the environment in Kenya. Women work the land in Kenya and suffer most from its devastation, but they do not own it. Women constitute seventy percent of the small farmers in Kenya, but they do not receive political or economic support because they are women. They do not have the political or economic power to demand fair compensation for their work. Fuelwood and water shortages force them to walk long distances searching for

fuel and water, while erosion threatens their land. Malnutrition and hunger result as environmental degradation diminishes both the productivity of the land and the time women have available to work it and prepare meals.⁴

The Movement

The GBM began with the ceremonial planting of seven trees in Nairobi on June 5, 1977, World Environment Day, in honor of two legendary women and five men who had made important contributions to their Kenyan communities. Although the GBM still sponsors some ceremonial plantings, its strength lies in the small tree nurseries that groups of women have started all over Kenya in order to employ and empower themselves and encourage reforestation. These women plant seeds, grow seedlings, and then release the young trees to be planted by farmers, school children and church members. The GBM pays the women who work in the nurseries for each released tree that survives. Over the last 15 years the movement has been successful in meeting many goals, all of which relate directly to the empowerment of women and the protection of the environment.

Objectives

The movement has many objectives which Maathai outlines in her book The Green Belt Movement. Some of those objectives relate directly to the

practice of planting and growing trees: providing fuelwood, preventing soil erosion, preserving indigenous flora, conserving water and preventing desertification. Other objectives relate to the use of tree planting as a way to empower people. These objectives include creating an income for women, fostering self-employment, encouraging communities--especially women, youth and handicapped persons--to work together and helping people to discover the wisdom that lies within themselves and their culture. Another objective of the movement, increasing the production of food, is achieved through the combined effects of improving the environment by planting trees and empowering small farmers. Greater confidence in their own knowledge about the earth helps these farmers to become better farmers, and when their incomes are increased through tree planting, some of that money can be invested in supplies for the farm. Finally, the GBM seeks to raise public awareness of environmental issues and to address complicated problems such as poverty and over-population. The movement works to educate the common and the elite people of Kenya about the problems it addresses and the solutions in which all people can participate.⁵

Method

The GBM seeks to attain its objectives through a program that involves the establishment of women's cooperative nurseries that plant and raise seedlings and then release the young trees to small farmers, schools and churches that plant them to create Green Belts--usually of one thousand or more trees. First, The National Women's Council of Kenya raises awareness, explaining why people should plant trees and how the GBM works.⁶ Then the interested women of a community form a group, find a location and register with the GBM headquarters. It helps if at least one member of the group can read and write.

Then the hard work of establishing the nursery begins. Women dig, terrace and fence; they harvest indigenous seeds from the wild and plant them. Throughout this process they can seek advice from headquarters and from local foresters. As they nurture the young seedlings, they report to headquarters on their progress and begin to promote tree planting in the community, encouraging the establishment of private and public Green Belts.

Small farmers and public groups in the community that wish to establish a Green Belt contact staff members at headquarters who arrange the release of trees from the nursery. The release of the first seedlings takes

place only three to six months after the establishment of the nursery. The women of the nursery supervise the planting of the young trees and follow-up to ensure their survival; then they report to headquarters. After submitting this report, the women receive payment from the GBM headquarters for the surviving seedlings.⁷

Results

This program has been quite successful in attaining many of the objectives of the GBM. Some of the successes can be measured quantitatively. By 1993 the GBM had provided employment for 50,000 women who had planted ten million seedlings, eighty percent of which had grown to maturity. Meanwhile women had established over one thousand nurseries; one million school children had participated in planting public Green Belts, and people in thirty African countries had begun efforts to start their own Green Belt Movements.⁸

Other results of the GBM are harder to measure. For instance, the public has become increasingly aware of environmental problems and of how other problems are linked to environmental degradation. Students learn about these issues at school, and Moi University has established a program in environmental studies. Other non-governmental organizations have turned

their attention to environmental and development issues. Finally, the government of Kenya, seeing the success of the movement, has increased its own spending on tree planting over the last few years.⁹

The GBM in Kenya has been successful for many reasons. Its leaders built it around a problem that people can see and on knowledge and skills that they already had: the need to plant trees in Kenya and the knowledge of how to grow them and how to live in a way that sustains the earth.¹⁰ The movement succeeded because it remained separate from the government and maintained freedom of operation and because its leaders have been faithful to it, always trying to raise consciousness, engage the support of the people and raise adequate funds to support it.¹¹ Another reason the GBM has been successful is that its leaders have recognized the importance of short-term goals and benefits. The money and public approval women earn when they establish nurseries, plant seedlings and release them to establish public and private Green Belts builds the enthusiasm and dedication that are needed to meet the long-term objectives of saving the environment and empowering people.¹²

In spite of its success, the movement still deals with many challenges. It has been unsuccessful among nomadic peoples in the north where trees are

especially needed but where the poorest women have dropped out of the program because even the short-term goals take too long to achieve.¹³ Its leaders have struggled with the difficulty of involving more handicapped people in the movement. They also ask if the movement should become self-sustaining by encouraging the nurseries to sell the seedlings to small farmers and public groups rather than give the seedlings away and receive compensation from headquarters. For now, though, the need to follow-up on the progress of donated trees and the need to continue encouraging women to make the connections between environment, poverty, hunger and politics outweigh the need to become self-sustaining.

The fact that men own the land in Kenya and that they usually own only a small piece of land challenges the movement. Too often, people do not think they own enough land to grow trees, but this problem can be solved through education about agroforestry. The more difficult problem to solve is that the women who work the land do not own it or the trees they plant on it. This fact works as a disincentive to planting trees.¹⁴

Finally, as the movement becomes stronger and leaders like Maathai become more politically involved, the movement may face greater opposition from the government. For instance, when Maathai successfully opposed the

construction of a sixty story building in Nairobi's Uhuru Park, the GBM lost its government-provided offices and had to move to Maathai's home.¹⁵

Empowerment of Women

In spite of the constraints described above, the GBM continues to establish nurseries, plant trees, provide a forum for the discussion of the many issues that are linked to environmental degradation and empower women. Women have empowered themselves and improved their own lives through the GBM without arousing public opposition to "women's rights."¹⁶ The GBM gives as much attention to consciousness raising and empowerment as it gives to planting trees. Maathai believes that as women discover the power they have to change the environment, they will also find the power to challenge social conditions and change their lives in other ways. For Maathai, empowerment begins with action. If you talk about a problem people feel that there is no hope, but if you do something, like planting a tree, then people experience empowerment.¹⁷

The GBM empowers women by showing them that they have the knowledge and ability through common sense, tradition and experience to make a difference; they do not need to use high technology or even to know

how to read and write.¹⁸ The Movement further empowers women by making the nurseries and tree planting an income generating activity.¹⁹

This empowerment of women and other marginalized people threatens the government. This fact, Maathai's activities with the opposition party and her support of protests to free political prisoners have caused the Movement to become more political than it was in its early years. But Maathai knows that one cannot struggle for rights or for the environment without getting into conflict with politicians.²⁰ While politicization of the Movement means facing opposition and dealing with conflict, it also opens a new space in which women can be empowered.

Part Two

The Chipko Movement in India

Background

The Chipko Andolan, or Hugging Movement, began in the Himilayas in the Garhwal division of a northern state of India known as Uttar Pradesh. The Garhwal division consists of four districts: Uttarkashi and Chamoli, which lie on the border with Tibet, and Tehri and Pauri. The entire division has a population of 700,000, which is only one percent of the total population of Uttar Pradesh, and the northern-most districts of Uttarkashi and Chamoli are more sparsely populated than the other two.²¹

Women in these hills must struggle to survive. Subsistence farming supports those villagers only three to six months of the year, so they depend on the forest and its products to survive. Among other things, the forest provides them food, medicines, fuel, fodder and shelter. Men own the land and taboos prevent women from plowing; therefore, women must depend upon men in spite of the fact that they do the rest of the work to raise crops and perform most of the foraging for forest resources.²²

The addition of the problem of commercial exploitation of the forests to this life of subsistence threatened the survival of the Garhwal residents.

After the 1962 Indo-Chinese conflict, the government introduced roads and communications systems to the Garhwal division. With them came contractors who brought laborers to the region from hundreds of miles away to clear cut the forests.²³ As a result, the villagers faced soil erosion and in monsoon season floods and landslides; women found themselves walking further to find the forest products on which they depended, and young men left the hills to join the army or find other work. The Chipko movement to save the trees of the Garhwal region grew out of the people's outrage at this situation.

While the movement grew out of this outrage, it also has roots in a long history of people's activism and nonviolent protest. As Vandana Shiva puts it, the movement is "not the conceptual creation of any one individual. It is the expression of an old social consciousness in a new context."²⁴ An early example of that consciousness occurred in 1731 in Rajasthan when a Bishnoi woman called Amrita Devi opposed the Maharaja's axemen who had come to fell the village's sacred *khejri* trees. The villagers followed Amrita Devi's lead, hugging the trees to save them. By the end of the day 300 members of the village had been massacred. The discovery of what had happened mortified the Maharaja who declared that no one under his rule would ever cut another of the Bishnoi trees.²⁵

In spite of occasional trouble with Indian rulers, the people of Garhwal generally had free access to the forest until the nineteenth century when the British government of India and private citizens from Britain began to claim ownership of land that had always been village commons. The villagers resisted this encroachment on the forests. In 1930 and 1931 nonviolent protests against the use of forests solely for British commercial purposes erupted in Uttar Pradesh and throughout India. On May 30, 1930, many unarmed villagers were killed or injured at a protest at Tilari village in Tehri district.²⁶

Mira Behn and Sarala Behn, two European women who had been disciples of Gandhi, strengthened the dedication to nonviolent protest among the people of Uttar Pradesh when they made their homes there after Gandhi's death. These women and other followers of Gandhi, called Sarvodaya workers, organized their movement around four issues: organizing woman power, opposing alcoholism, defending forest rights and setting-up small local forest-based industries.²⁷ In the 1960s the women of this movement focussed on problems related to the abuse of liquor while the men established local forest-based industries to create jobs for themselves.²⁸

In 1964 a group of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, led by Chandi Prasadd Bhatt, established the Dasholi Gram Swarajya Mandal (DGSM) which set up a small resin factory, sought government contracts for trees and even gathered forest products to try to support themselves. But they faced opposition from the government in each attempt. In July 1970 when the Alakanda River flooded, washing away bridges, timber, cattle, homes and people, the DGSM members volunteered as relief workers. Working closely with the women of the region, they began to make the connections between clear cutting, overgrazing, road building, soil erosion, floods and landslides.²⁹ Meanwhile, the government responded to the flood by planting cash crop pine trees rather than indigenous oak trees whose dead leaves absorb more water than pine needles and are richer in nutrients.³⁰ Horrible floods and landslides occurred again in Uttar Pradesh in 1973, 1977, 1978 and 1979.

The Movement

In 1971 and 1972, protests against government forestry policy and the exploitation of the forests by outside contractors took place in some of the small villages of the Garhwal district. In the meantime the government allotted 300 ash trees to an outside company called the Simon Company and denied the DGSM's request of only ten ash trees for their small factory. On

March 27, 1973, the local people decided to stop the Simon Company from felling the 300 trees. On April 24 the DGSM and other local supporters walked from Gopeshwar to Mandal, beating drums and singing, to oppose the Simon Company. This event marked the beginning of the Chipko movement. In the face of this opposition, the Simon Company pulled out, and the government eventually had to give the company's permit to the DGSM.³¹ In 1973 and 1974 the Chipko movement spread quickly throughout the hills and villages of Garhwal. Although it began as a movement of men to secure government forest contracts and to produce local employment, by the end of 1974 women had become an integral part of the movement and its objective turned toward forest protection.

In March 1974, 2500 trees were marked to be felled in the Reni forest above the Alakanda River, the river that had flooded so badly in 1970.³² One day government officials called the men of the surrounding villages away from their homes to collect compensation for land they had lost during the 1962 Chinese invasion.³³ Of course, that just happened to be the day lumbermen came to the village of Lata to fell the trees of the Reni forest.

One little girl spotted them and ran to inform Gaura Devi about it. Gaura Devi, a widow in her fifties, was a natural leader, and organized a group of about thirty women and children who went to talk to the contractor's men Gaura Devi is said to have

pushed her way forward and stood before a gun carried by one of the laborers. She defied him to shoot her first, before touching the trees. "Brother, this forest is our *maika* (mother's home). Do not axe it. Landslides will ruin our homes and fields." She and her companions were successful in forcing the angry contractor and his men to return without their logs. That night, the women of the village stood guard over their beloved trees.³⁴

After this incident, women became increasingly active and influential in the Chipko movement. Although the best known leaders of the movement were men like Sunderlal Bahuguna and C.P. Bhatt, these men had been taught by Sarala Behn and Mira Behn. Women teachers and activists gave the movement its strength.³⁵

In 1977 at the village of Adwani, Bachhni Devi, the wife of the local village head, himself a contractor, defied her husband and joined the struggle to save the trees.³⁶ Also in Adwani, a woman coined one of the popular refrains of the movement when an angry forest officer said angrily,

"You foolish women. Do you know what forests bear? Resin, timber, foreign exchange." One woman responded in the same tone. "Yes, we know what forests bear. Soil, water and pure air."³⁷

In 1980 the women of Chipko at Dongri Paintoli opposed the men of their own village and led a protest to save the trees. The village council of men wanted to "sell" the trees to the government for a road, a school, a

hospital and electricity. They had failed to recognize the connection between their own survival and the well-being of the forest. But the local women intervened, and the government eventually banned felling in the area.³⁸

In 1980 Indira Gandhi declared a fifteen-year ban on green felling in Uttar Pradesh.³⁹ With this victory, the character of Chipko changed. C.P. Bhatt remained in the Garhwal region, placing greater emphasis on the reforestation camps he had begun years before. Now women defied tradition and participated in the camps. These women found their own empowerment even as they encouraged the camps to plant more indigenous trees for the good of the environment.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, Sunderlal Bahuguna and his followers, including many women, began a program of long marches to spread the news of Chipko and its success. From 1981 to 1983 they walked from Kashmir to Kohima, talking about the intrinsic value of the forests and the strength of the people. The Chipko movement spread across India:

to Himachal Pradesh in the north, to Karnataka in the south [where it is known as Appiko], to Rajasthan in the west, to Bihar in the east, and to the Vindhyas in Central India.⁴¹

Objectives

In the early years of the movement the activism of women helped to create a shift in the objective of Chipko. In the beginning the movement had

been primarily concerned with creating employment for local men and regaining forest rights, but Chipko moved toward the objective of ecological rehabilitation for three reasons. First, Mira Behn, and her follower Sunderlal Bahuguna, provided the movement with an ecological perspective rooted in the Gandhian tradition that resists "progress" when it harms common people. Second, the DGSM workers saw the plight of women during floods and landslides and began making connections between forest exploitation and "natural disaster." Third, women joined the movement bringing with them the knowledge that saving trees meant saving human lives.⁴²

Some tension exists in the movement between the more detailed objectives of Bahuguna and Bhatt. Bahuguna believes that the ecology of the hills is too fragile at this time to sustain any green felling, even by local residents. He encourages villagers to gather the forest products they need to sustain life without harming trees. Bhatt, on the other hand, believes that local residents should be able to fell trees to support small local enterprises. As Shiva points out, Bhatt's model assumes that poverty has a technological solution and adheres to the dominant model of development that calls economic growth "development" in spite of the fact that it may eventually threaten survival.⁴³

Method

Until the 1980 government ban on green felling, the Chipko movement used a variety of nonviolent methods to save trees: marches, fasts, hugging trees, tying sacred threads around them and enlisting the support of lumbermen brought in from other parts of the country. After the ban, Bahuguna and Bhatt chose different methods to continue the struggle. Bahuguna undertook the 4870 kilometer foot march from Kashmir to Kohima to spread ideas and expand the Chipko base, while Bhatt remained in the Garhwal region running eco-development camps at which local villagers, including women, participate in workshops and plant trees. Bhatt uses his influence to further the work of Chipko in his own region and to set examples that can be followed elsewhere.⁴⁴

Results

The combined methods, objectives and women's activism of Chipko have resulted in some notable victories. Because of the activism of men and women in the Reni forest in 1974, the government had to end the private contract system of felling. In 1975 it formed a public Uttar Pradesh Forest Corporation.⁴⁵ Chipko continued to achieve small victories until the fifteen-year ban on commercial felling began in 1980. As noted above, however, the

movement did not stop with that major victory. Bahuguna began his long march, Bhatt focussed on planting trees, Chipko spread to other parts of India and it won international recognition.⁴⁶

Empowerment of Women

Sometime between 1974 when the women of Lata joined Chipko in the absence of men and 1980 when the women of Dongri Paintoli opposed their own men to save the forests, the Chipko movement became a vehicle for the empowerment of women. Women originally became involved in Chipko through contact with the DGSM relief workers because they understood the link between their own suffering and the commercial abuse of the mountain forests.⁴⁷ Survival was at stake. Although women's participation did not ensure that the movement would take on a gender perspective, the movement grew in that direction. Women have protested with--but also against--local men, and they have encouraged the planting of indigenous trees. They have begun to speak out against women's inequality with men; they have renewed the struggle against alcoholism, and they are seeking greater political power.⁴⁸

In Gopeshwar women created a cooperative called the Mahila Mandal to protect the forest around the town. The cooperative's watchwomen receive

regular wages, and the Mahila Mandal enforces rules for proper use of trees by exacting fines or confiscating tools when a violator harms the trees.⁴⁹ Also in Gopeshwar, a woman leader has emerged in the local government.⁵⁰ Women, when they are able, attend the DGSM educational tree-planting camps, and they are demanding to take part in community decisions.⁵¹

Survival is still a full time job for women in this region, and women still face discrimination and perform most of the work necessary to survival even in the households of Chipko supporters. But women continue to struggle for greater power, and their participation in Chipko has planted a seed that has the potential to blossom into increased empowerment for the women of Garhwal. In short, the Chipko movement has become a success not only in the struggle for local rights and forest protection, but also in the struggle for women's rights.⁵²

Part Three

The Women's Pentagon Action Movement in the United States

Background

The Women's Pentagon Actions of November 1980 and 1981 are among the two earliest self-described ecofeminist actions in the United States. The actions grew out of the concern of women in the Northeast about ecological issues after the Three Mile Island meltdown in 1979,⁵³ a concern with links to the work of Ellen Swallow, founder of the science of ecology, and Rachel Carson who alerted us to the threat of chemical pesticides.⁵⁴ The WPA was largely planned and attended by women from upstate New York, where the first Women's Rights Convention was held in 1848 and women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman worked for abolition and women's rights. The WPA also had roots in early U.S. feminism and in the "Women Strike for Peace" and "Ban the Bomb" movements of the 1950s.⁵⁵ Coming out of the peace and ecological activities of radical and socialist feminism and the spirituality of cultural feminism, the WPA embraced radical, socialist and cultural feminists and early ecofeminists.⁵⁶

Ynestra King, a graduate student teaching classes and doing comprehensive exams in feminist theory, responded to the Three Mile Island meltdown in 1979 by calling together groups of women to talk about feminism and ecology. From these meetings emerged plans for the "Conference on Women and Life on Earth: Eco-feminism in the Eighties," organized primarily by King and held in Amherst in March 1980. The conference, supported by Murray Bookchin's Institute for Social Ecology, brought together women from a variety of movements: feminist, lesbian, disarmament, antinuclear, environmental and women's spirituality. Over seven hundred women from all over the Northeast came; more women wanted to attend, but registration had to be limited. As the women at this conference talked about the many issues that concerned them, the idea of an action at the Pentagon emerged.⁵⁷

The Pentagon emerged as the symbol of all the male [*sic*] violence we opposed. It is the real workplace of the American generals who plan the annihilation of the world as their daily work, far removed from the lives they imperil and the murders they commit. We wanted it to be clear to women around the world that there is feminist awareness of, and opposition to, the imperialist role of the United States military over the globe.⁵⁸

The Movement

Having decided on an action, some of these women gathered again in September to hold the first meeting of the Women's Pentagon Action. The meeting ran by consensus, and the women agreed that participants would be invited to act as individuals, not as a coalition of groups.⁵⁹

Somehow the Women's Pentagon Action had to reflect our feminist principles and process. And we began to talk about what these principles were. We talked about connections between violence against women and the rape of the earth. We talked about racism and American imperialism. We heard from women about the effect of military spending on the human services upon which women depend. We connected the masculinist mentality and nuclear bombs. Lesbian oppression and reproductive freedom were also issues that concerned us And we talked about how we might do our action with ritual politics and theatre and images and how many women we thought it would take to reach around the Pentagon. We were defining feminist resistance.⁶⁰

They decided to write a Unity Statement, and Grace Paley agreed to draft it with input from everyone who expressed interest. Throughout September and October Grace read the statement to women over the phone, on the subway and on trips through New York, Vermont and Massachusetts, and then she responded to their suggestions.⁶¹ In the end the Unity Statement emphasized that the women of the WPA came from all walks of life, doing traditional women's work and non-traditional work, living in rural

and urban areas, married, single, heterosexual and lesbian, young and old. But they had much in common. They all feared for their lives, for the lives of children and for the life of the planet. The Unity Statement made connections among militarism, the wealth of large corporations, scientists who serve the military and those corporations, racism, imperialism, poverty, violence against women and the general oppression of women. It voiced respect for the work of traditional women as nurturers and caretakers and recognized that "all is connectedness." It closed by stating that those participating in the WPA seek to live in a way that respects those connections. It contained some essentialist language, but it began to move past essentialism in its hope that the ways of violence would not be passed from fathers to sons.⁶²

On November 16 and 17, 1980, 2000 women, most from the Northeast, gathered for Sunday workshops, an evening vigil and Monday's protest at the Pentagon. Many of these women were under thirty, students and second generation protesters participating with their mothers.⁶³ Many lesbians also participated.⁶⁴

The lesbian group from rural New England who played an important role in the Women's Pentagon Action . . . had been part of the women's movement in the early seventies and moved to the country to create autonomous lives. Many of the women

built houses together and supported themselves by such basic skills as carpentry and farming. The ecofeminist perspective allowed them to reenter politics, which they in turn infused with their strong spirituality.⁶⁵

These 2000 women, young and old, lesbian and straight, peace activists environmental activists, and feminists returning to activism, attended workshops on Monday. The workshops took place at the Marie H. Reed Community Learning Center in northwest Washington in a neighborhood facing gentrification; the long-time residents of the neighborhood had worked hard to improve and rebuild it, and now wealthy white people were moving in, forcing property values and rents up and forcing out the other residents. The workshops, like the neighborhood in which they were held, called women to make connections: women and poverty, women and racism, women and healthcare, women and sexual orientation, women and ecology, women and militarism, women and violence, women and the arts. Meanwhile, other women participated in civil disobedience training.⁶⁶

In the evening the women held a vigil for Yolanda Ward, a 22 year old black woman activist from Washington, D.C., who had been murdered on October 31. She had been a rape-crisis counselor, a member of the city-wide Housing Coalition board and of Black United Front. Some suspected that she had been assassinated for political reasons.⁶⁷ On Monday morning the

protest began; it consisted of four parts, each led by a huge puppet: black for mourning, red for raging, yellow for empowerment and white for defiance.⁶⁸

The mourning began with a silent walk through Arlington Cemetery. When the women left the cemetery, they marched on to the Pentagon to the beat of a bass drum. They stopped on the lawn in front of the River Entrance to build their own cemetery out of cardboard gravestones dedicated to the unknown woman, to groups of women, and to particular women.⁶⁹ Ynestra King describes the scene vividly.

I certainly didn't expect to cry. I didn't expect to scream. After all, I was an initiator of the action. I had been imagining women encircling the Pentagon for months. I knew exactly what was going to happen and I had the whole thing pretty well intellectualized. But as I watched the gravestones placed one by one--the unknown women, Karen Silkwood, Yolanda Ward, victims of illegal abortions, rape, war, racism, and I stood observing other women mourning and interpreting the action for mostly male reporters, I felt as if I was being torn in two.⁷⁰

The most memorable tombstone was brought by a California housewife who had never been in a political action in her life. She traveled alone from California with her tombstone on which she had written, "For the three Vietnamese women my son killed."⁷¹

So much for intellectualizing. Finally I tore off the little card I was wearing that said "Press."⁷²

The beat of the drum picked up; the red puppet appeared, and the women moved naturally into the second stage, rage. Women waved posters, stomped their feet, clenched their fists, drummed their homemade instruments and chanted. Meanwhile, "white bird puppets atop high poles rent the sky, swooping, flapping their long gauzy wings in fury, stirring the air."⁷³ People came to the windows of the Pentagon, and one woman, a secretary, quit her job and came outside to join the raging women. She had seen protests before, but none had moved her like this one.⁷⁴

Then the yellow empowerment puppet took the lead; it held baskets of scarves the women took as they began to make the one-mile circle around the Pentagon. As they made the circle they sang songs from the civil rights and women's movements and read the Unity Statement. A few women ran around the women forming the circle at a faster pace, reporting on their progress and relaying messages. Some women inside the Pentagon offered signs of solidarity, and later the participants learned that the people inside had held a lottery about whether or not the women would reach all they way around. The odds were against them, but they completed the circle with women to spare.⁷⁵

Now that they had surrounded the building, the stage of defiance began. The women blocked three of the five entrances, mostly by sitting down on the stairs, their arms linked. But at the loading dock entrance a group from Vermont known as the Spinsters wove the doors shut and decorated their webs with flowers and feathers, leaves and bells. The women not performing civil disobedience provided support by singing, reading excerpts from women's history and explaining the event to passers-by. Unfortunately, the women were not very successful in blocking the doors because many police already stood at the entrances and because officers and officials going in and out of the Pentagon did not hesitate to step over or even on the women.⁷⁶

The Pentagon police arrested the women doing civil disobedience, putting them face to face with the connections they were making.

The Pentagon police are almost all black. They mostly treated women gently and with respect. Some even confided sympathy with our action and explained that as black people (mostly men) living in Washington DC they had a hard time getting jobs. Many of them are Vietnam veterans, conscripted to fight the Pentagon's wars. It was a confusing situation for us to encounter these black people between our mostly white demonstration and the white higher-ups at whom our opposition was directed.⁷⁷

One young woman was arrested by a man who had been arrested six times during the civil rights movement. He tested her politics by asking her if she thought a black man could be a good president, and she said "Why not a black woman?"⁷⁸

Authorities arrested 124 women and arraigned most on charges of obstruction, which had a maximum penalty of a \$50 fine or thirty days in jail. The women had expected small fines, but most of them received ten or thirty day sentences. The longer sentences went to women who had been arrested in an April demonstration at the Pentagon. Thirty-four of the women plead guilty or *nolo contendere*, and police took them in handcuffs, leg irons and shackled at the waist to the Federal Women's Penitentiary in Alderson, West Virginia, even though it was illegal to send anyone serving a sentence of less than one year to a Federal penitentiary. The fact that four judges in four courtrooms gave out the same harsh sentences raised questions about due process. Had the judges agreed on the sentences before the trials?⁷⁹

In February 1981 one hundred fifty organizers met to evaluate the action and to begin plans for a second action to take place in November 1981. This year they established an information clearing house in Philadelphia, and

a local group in Washington handled logistics. In 1981 four thousand women from all over the U.S. gathered for the protest at the Pentagon.⁸⁰

At the second WPA women wove a braid around the Pentagon and blocked all five entrances by weaving them shut with yarn. The women who did not participate in civil disobedience took part in a closing ritual of planting vegetable and flower seeds in the Pentagon lawn.⁸¹ Fewer women participated in civil disobedience this year, but the sixty-five who did take part in it received ten to thirty day sentences. They practiced bail solidarity. Everyone arrested refused to leave custody until all were released, a sign of solidarity with those who could not afford bail. Ynestra King was imprisoned in a basketball court with forty other women who had received ten day sentences. Authorities sent the women with longer sentences to Alderson again. The women imprisoned in Arlington with King drafted a statement explaining why they were in jail. It echoed the Unity Statement, emphasizing the connections they were making and their commitment to nonviolent direct action.⁸²

After the second Pentagon action, the local units of the WPA continued to participate in smaller events and demonstrations against their own local "Pentagons."⁸³ But plans for another large action at the Pentagon

did not succeed. Many WPA participants performed civil disobedience at a protest at the UN in 1983, and that action exhausted them. Meanwhile, concern grew that the WPA was too white and weak on class consciousness. In response to that concern, women held an action on Wall Street in December 1984, but fewer women participated in this action than in the previous ones, and the participants were still overwhelmingly white.⁸⁴

Objectives

The WPA had two sets of objectives. First, it sought to contribute to the movements from which it had emerged. The WPA wanted to "articulate [the] convergence of feminism, ecology and peace" and to bring women of each of those movements together.⁸⁵ In bringing these women together for a nonviolent protest at the Pentagon, the WPA struggled to give women an opportunity to better understand the connections among militarism, imperialism, racism, sexism, poverty and the degradation of the earth and, in turn, to make those connections clearer to their respective groups and movements. Finally, it tried to "forge a politic that was true to women and to feminism" and to be true to that politic.⁸⁶

A second set of objectives, more concrete than the first, can be found in the Unity Statement. The women of the WPA wanted good food, housing,

clean air and water, affordable childcare, meaningful work and unions for women that would demand safety, equality and an end to sexual harassment in the workplace. They asked for healthcare that would recognize the needs of women in general and of handicapped women in particular. They insisted that each woman should have the right to choose whether and when to have children. The Unity Statement called for education to include the stories of women. It demanded an end to violence in the streets of the U.S. and in the places that the Pentagon and multinational corporations carry out their imperialism. The women sought to end heterosexism and racism as well as the arms race. They called for renewable sources of energy and a "healthy sensible loving way to live."⁸⁷

Method

Its attempt to build a truly feminist politic gave way to a distinct, decentralized, creative method.⁸⁸ It also led the women to work outside the political mainstream.⁸⁹ They violated many of the rules of traditional political protests: they invited any individual woman who agreed with the Unity Statement to participate, but they did not accept organizational or individual endorsement. They operated by consensus decision-making, and had no speakers or leaders. They assigned greater importance to integrity

than to numbers, so they ignored the "lowest-common-denominator" rule for protests by large and diverse groups: they demonstrated against multiple connected issues in the creative ways described above.⁹⁰

Results

The symbolic method chosen by the WPA could not achieve the clear objectives named in the Unity Statement. But these non-traditional methods led the women of the WPA to achieve other objectives such as bringing women together from diverse movements and providing a space in which they could strengthen their understanding of the connections among oppressions. While the decentralized nature of the movement may have contributed to its early dispersal, it was also essential to the creation of a truly feminist politic and, therefore, to the legacy the WPA left behind.

It had a mythic quality--an action that told all the truths, had no identifiable heros, and was beautiful, spiritual, womanly and feminist. These actions hit a responsive chord in women who had not felt comfortable in other forms of politics and gave women in many places the confidence to go ahead with political initiatives that were deemed 'naive' by experienced politicians and activists.

The Women's Pentagon Action provided a model of audacity and imagination that has changed the landscape of public political action and possibility. Throughout the 1980s hundreds of actions were taken by women around the world in the cause of peace.⁹¹

Some of those actions took place at the Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice which brought 15,000 women to protest at the Seneca Army Depot in the summer of 1983. That encampment in upstate New York, largely the vision of women who had participated in the WPA, ran on a sustained decentralized government that made consensus decisions. The Seneca encampment spawned many others throughout the U.S. In 1987 when Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev signed the first international agreement to reverse the nuclear arms race, the media recognized the international women's peace encampment movement as having been instrumental in creating public pressure in favor of nuclear arms reduction.⁹² But the Seneca encampment was not the only legacy of the WPA. Much of the diverse ecofeminist theory and creative activism we see today grew from the seeds of the Women's Pentagon Action.

Empowerment of Women

The WPA empowered women by giving cultural feminists an opportunity to move back into politics and by giving women a way to respond to multiple issues that concerned them without forsaking feminism.⁹³ It also provided creative methods of protest that women repeated in other protests and movements across the country. But the most important opportunity for

women's empowerment offered by the WPA came not from the actions themselves, but from the connections it made and the theory that emerged from those connections: a theory of ecofeminism that rejects all forms of oppression and therefore possesses the strength and versatility to liberate women from multiple oppressions.

Part Four

Observations

Feminists in the United States can learn a great deal from the movements described above, especially the GBM and Chipko. These three movements teach liberal and socialist feminists that women can create great change, even when they do not have political or economic power. They also demonstrate how women can empower themselves in a movement against oppression that does not focus specifically on women's rights, women's roles, or women's culture. The Chipko case is especially interesting because in it women joined a movement of men, caused the objectives of the movement to change and finally began to struggle for their own rights vis-a-vis local men. Their story demonstrates that women can be empowered in a mixed movement, a lesson for radical separatist feminists here who believe that separation from men is necessary to women's empowerment.

By comparing the results of the three movements we can learn about the difference between direct action that affects one's daily life and is aimed at making material changes, and a symbolic action. In GBM and Chipko, women addressed the material hardships and oppression experienced by the

people of Kenya and India. They engaged women directly in improving their livelihoods, caring for the environment and empowering themselves. These actions very clearly empowered women and provided benefits to the environment. The WPA, on the other hand, gave greater attention to the systemic causes of oppression rather than to women's experiences of oppression. The symbolic action they used to denounce those systems yielded primarily symbolic and theoretical results. We cannot directly link specific environmental benefits to the symbolic actions of the WPA, and the way in which it empowered women is intangible.

Review

This chapter told the stories of three movements, the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, the Chipko movement in India and the Women's Pentagon Actions in the United States. The stories of those movements built on the observation in Chapter One that feminism--and ecofeminism--is the empowerment of women. It also provided clear examples of how women's activities often bring them in closer contact with nature on a daily basis than men.

Chapter Three will explore the ecofeminist theory of Wangari Maathai, Vandana Shiva and Ynestra King. Studying the theory of these women who

have been active in each of the movements discussed above will provide an opportunity to reflect on the relationship between ecofeminist practice and theory. Chapter Three will also explore the relationship between ecofeminist theory and the empowerment of women, just as Chapter Two examined the relationship between ecofeminist movements and the empowerment of women.

CHAPTER THREE

WOMEN THINKING ABOUT WOMEN AND NATURE

This chapter turns from the Green Belt Movement, Chipko and the Women's Pentagon Actions to the theories of Wangari Maathai, Vandana Shiva and Ynestra King. In doing so, it will provide reflections on the relationship between ecofeminist practice and theory and on the relationship between ecofeminist theory and the empowerment of women. This chapter builds on the concept of feminist theory introduced in Chapter One, that theory involves making connections, explaining and envisioning.

Maathai, Shiva and King had each begun to develop theories before they became active in the GBM, Chipko and WPA. However, their publication of those theories follows or is interspersed with their activism. This fact may suggest that they understand activism to be more important than publishing. But it also suggests that the actions they take help them to refine their theories and to express them more clearly. Maathai takes action so seriously that she has not developed a comprehensive theory. The pieces of her theory must be gleaned from her works which primarily aim at telling of the GBM's success and outlining its objectives and methods. Shiva says that her experiences with activists, especially Chipko women, inspire all her

theory.¹ King insists on the importance of praxis; she notes that theory often follows practice, trying to explain the actions people already are taking.²

This chapter is divided into four parts, one for each of the theorists and one part for observations and review. It begins with Maathai, who does not use the term "ecofeminist," continues with Shiva, who envisions an ecological trans-gender feminism, and moves to King, who embraces the name "ecofeminist" wholeheartedly. In each of these parts the theorist's background, the connections and explanations she makes and her vision are discussed. Each part closes with a critique that includes reflections on how the theory deals with the problem of dualism and how it offers empowerment to women.

Part One

Wangari Maathai

Background

Born in Nyeri, Kenya, Wangari Maathai grew up between the Great Rift Valley and Mt. Kenya, but she came to the United States to study biology. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree at a small college in Kansas and a Master of Science degree at the University of Pittsburgh. In 1966 she returned to Kenya and became the first woman in East and Central Africa to earn a doctorate and teach at the University of Nairobi.³

At one time she was married to a member of Parliament, and they had three children. During their marriage she began seeking ways to aid her husband's poor constituents. These early efforts to empower others did not succeed, but Maathai did not forget the lessons she learned from these efforts or lose her will to help the common people of Kenya empower themselves. Maathai's husband found it difficult to be married to a woman with more education than he had, and the couple divorced.⁴

Maathai came from the Kikuyu community in Kenya and did not experience a great deal of sex discrimination as a girl. She learned that "the sky is the limit." But her experiences at the University of Nairobi and in her

marriage showed her that other people can keep you from growing to your potential just because you are a woman.⁵

As Chapter Two noted, Maathai began working with the National Council of Women of Kenya in 1977 and developed the Green Belt Movement. In 1989 Maathai and other women opposed and defeated plans to build a sixty story building in one of Nairobi's few green parks.⁶ She joined Kenya's opposition party, Forum for the Restoration of Democracy, and authorities arrested her in January 1992 when she took part in a press conference where the party reported that President Moi had planned a military coup to block elections.⁷ More recently, police clubbed her unconscious for participating with rural women in a protest for the release of political prisoners. In her early fifties and still recovering, Maathai continues her work to empower women, to restore Kenya's ecology and to help Kenya move toward democracy.⁸

Connections and Explanations

The GBM grew out of the specific connections and explanations Maathai makes. She believes that women and the environment are linked because women's role as caregivers causes them to experience the harms of environmental degradation more directly and immediately than men.

[At the National Council of Women of Kenya we] were into the U.N.'s "women's decade" and I got exposed to many of the problems women were facing--problems of firewood, malnutrition, lack of food and adequate water, unemployment, soil erosion And so we decided to go to the women. Why? Well, I am a woman. I was in a women's organization. Women are the ones most affected by these problems. Women are concerned about children, about the future.⁹

It is [the woman] who has to worry about how to feed her family, what to cook with, where she will get water from, why the topsoil is being lost, how she will grow enough food.¹⁰

In addition to her awareness of the special interest women have in the environment, Maathai understands the causes of environmental degradation. She knows that progress and development are often exploitation and maldevelopment: the true causes of environmental degradation and calamities too often blamed on their victims.¹¹ She recognizes the importance of planting indigenous trees rather than quick growing evergreens and eucalyptus that will do well at first but harm the environment later, and she knows that desertification happens in patches--in people's backyards--and that it must be fought at the family level.¹² She understands that world economics, poverty, the lack of human and women's rights in Kenya and environmental degradation are all linked because poor, hungry, disempowered people worry about survival; they do not plan their families or work to save the earth.¹³ Finally, she recognizes that all life forms, including humans, are

interdependent and that responsibility for the environment belongs to each individual.¹⁴

Vision

For Maathai, the objectives and methods of the Green Belt Movement lead toward her vision of a Kenya that lives by a system of sustainable development rooted in traditional Kenyan economics and powered by strong, willing people.¹⁵ It will be a Kenya in which women and other oppressed people will be empowered, because they will have empowered themselves as they created this new Kenya full of good soil, clean air, safe water, nutritious food and life-giving trees.

Comments and Criticism

Maathai's theory does not address the problem of dualism at all, either because it does not occur to her or because it does not seem important from her perspective. She does not have a dualistic view of nature and culture, perhaps because this dualism is not common in Kenya or because she and the women with whom she works are so aware of the link between nature and culture.

However, her experiences have given her a somewhat essentialist understanding of gender.

Women do a lot of work that requires caring. And I don't believe that it is solely indoctrination. Women started the environmental movement, and now it has become a movement that even financial donors see they should put money in, because the efforts are providing results. But the minute money is in, the men come in. I would not be surprised that eventually the more successful the Green Belt movement becomes, the more infiltrated it will be by men, who will be there more for the economic benefit than the commitment.¹⁶

This quote suggests that women are inherently more caring than men, a suggestion which makes the essentialist assumption, the first assumption in dualistic thinking. Assuming that women are inherently more caring than men and that men will come to the Green Belt Movement primarily for economic benefit seems to suggest that women and men have separate, and perhaps opposite, essences. In spite of this tendency toward essentialism the Green Belt Movement remains open to the men who do want to participate in it: those who are poor, handicapped or otherwise disempowered.

While Maathai sees maldevelopment as a cause of environmental degradation, she fails to connect maldevelopment to capitalism, science, technology, neo-colonialism or patriarchy. She does criticize the world economic system, but does so in the context of explaining that poor people do not work to protect the earth. When she criticizes technology she discusses only the way that technological development disempowers people, not the fact

that many technological advances contribute to maldevelopment and environmental destruction. Nonetheless, the connections Maathai does make and her earthy vision have led to outstanding results in the Kenyan environment and in the empowerment of Kenyan women.

Part Two

Vandana Shiva

Background

Vandana Shiva, a physicist, philosopher and feminist, directs the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Natural Resource Policy in India. Her father worked as a forester in the Himalayan forest, and her family has a tradition of activist women which she continues. She holds a Ph.D. in theoretical physics, but while she was working on her master's degree she began asking questions about the hazards of the work in which she was involved. Her instructors told her that she did not need to think about such things, so she went to Canada to study in a Foundations of Physics program that was asking some of the same questions. She wanted to get back to India and her people, though, and when she did she shifted to her current work in the policy of technology and science. Meanwhile, she volunteered and wrote for the Chipko movement. She credits the words, commitment and actions of the women of the Chipko movement with inspiring her theory. Soon, ecology emerged as her primary concern.¹⁷

Connections and Explanations

To understand the connections and explanations Shiva makes, one must first understand her concept of maldevelopment. She uses this term to describe development practices that will, in the long run, harm the environment and the people who depend upon it.

Maldevelopment is the violation of the integrity of a living interconnected world, and it is simultaneously at the root of injustice, exploitation, inequality and violence.¹⁸

For Shiva the special relationship between Third World women and nature lies not primarily in the fact that these women are the first victims of environmental degradation caused by maldevelopment but in the fact that they offer the rest of the world knowledge, experience and a way of thinking needed to live in greater harmony with nature. They have been put into this position of potential leadership by the maldevelopment which marginalizes them and by the roles they have played in their culture as sustainers of life and maintainers of a culture that sees life as sacred.¹⁹

Maldevelopment has made the role of women as sustainers of life more difficult because it destroys the environment on which women depend to sustain life. It has also reinforced the role of women as sustainers of life because Third World men have responded to maldevelopment and

colonization by leaving their homes or by participating in military, logging and industrial activities which destroy life. As men move from activities that support the sustenance of life to those that destroy life, the role of women as the sustainers of life is reinforced.

In noting that culture and maldevelopment have put Third World women in a situation which has given them knowledge and experience from which the rest of the world needs to learn, Shiva avoids assuming that men and women have inherently separate essences. The fact that her viewpoint is not essentialist is further clarified in her distinction between the experience of women and men who live close to nature and those who do not.

The principle of creating and conserving life is lost to the ecologically alienated, consumerist elite women of the Third World and the over-consuming west, just as much as it is conserved in the lifestyle of the male and female forest-dwellers and peasants in small pockets of the Third World.²⁰

Shiva says that these women and male peasants and tribals who have remained close to nature but witnessed the destruction of maldevelopment offer an alternative to patriarchal, dualistic and capitalistic thought categories. Third World women active in ecological movements point to a new way of thinking which recognizes the central place of women in ending ecological crises. Women hold that central position because of the knowledge they have

about nature and the experience they have of living with nature rather than against it. This way of thinking, this paradigm, is new in that it challenges the Western concept of development and calls for the liberation of both women and nature.

Shiva has primarily described this new paradigm in terms of its challenges to the predominant Western paradigm. Those challenges begin with a rejection of dualistic thinking which separates culture from nature, mind from body, man from woman and gives greater value to the former categories.²¹ The new paradigm also challenges Western concepts of science, economy and development.²²

Shiva and the new paradigm challenge the Western concept of science by pointing out that science is not value-free and that the ideals of progress and development that science and capitalism urge are not universal norms. She identifies progress and development as "special projects of modern western patriarchy" that seek to continue the process of colonization.²³ She documents the misogyny and the hostility toward nature inherent in modern science. She criticizes modern science for its reductionism:

It reduce[s] the capacity of humanity to know nature both by excluding other knowers and other ways of knowing, and it reduce[s] the capacity of nature to creatively regenerate and

renew itself by manipulating it as inert and fragmented matter.²⁴

Shiva and the new paradigm also criticize modern capitalism. Third World women know from experience that, contrary to the assumption of capitalism, most development does not result in an increased availability of goods and decreased poverty.²⁵ Development often increases women's poverty first by denying their productivity because it does not yield profit and then by appropriating the resources they need. For instance, capitalists consider water management productive only when male engineers do it, not when women manage the water nature provides to sustain life. But when engineers build dams and put in pipes, women often lose the water resources on which they depend.²⁶ This false division between productive and unproductive labor has another important consequence:

This ideological divide between "productive" and "unproductive" work based on market criteria very rapidly unfolds into the contemporary economic crises in which wealth is no longer linked to work, or the production of goods and services [but to] unproductive and fictitious economic exchange.²⁷

Shiva notes that capitalism has introduced a false impression that development and ecology are mutually exclusive, an impression which hides "the real dichotomy between ecologically sound development and unsustainable and ecologically destructive economic growth."²⁸ Together

modern science and capitalism have created a notion of development--or maldevelopment--that threatens survival.

Shiva gives explicit documentation of how maldevelopment threatens forests, land, water, food production, health and survival. Maldevelopment in the forests by people who see the products of the forest as resin, lumber and capital rather than food, water and pure air has resulted in floods and soil erosion and made sustaining life more difficult for women. She has exposed the fallacies of the Green Revolution and its High Yield Variety seeds which require farmers to purchase seeds, fertilizer, irrigation systems and pesticides, and which reduce the "waste" of traditional plants that had been used to feed animals and replenish the soil.²⁹ Her most recent work points to a relationship between the genetically engineered seeds of the Green Revolution and reproductive technology. High Yield Variety seeds created in the laboratory deny the productivity of nature and farmers and lead to the colonization of the seeds' ability to reproduce. Successful farming becomes the achievement of scientists, not the work of farmers and the earth, and the new genetically altered seeds cannot reproduce themselves. Similarly, modern medical practices and reproductive technology deny the knowledge and productivity of mothers and midwives and allow the colonization of women's

ability to reproduce. Human reproduction becomes the achievement of doctors and scientists, and women become increasingly dependent upon doctors and technology during pregnancy and birth.³⁰

Shiva connects capitalism, maldevelopment and violence by pointing to the difference between the Western concept of subsistence as poverty and the real poverty created by maldevelopment.³¹ Westerners perceive subsistence as poverty because it means living without the material advantages and conveniences so appreciated in the West. But maldevelopment creates real poverty by destroying the environment, which makes subsistence impossible. People whose lives depend most directly upon the earth can no longer support themselves when the environment is destroyed. While maldevelopment offers material wealth to some people, it creates hunger and helplessness for others. Because it creates new inequalities, maldevelopment produces violence. The relationship between capitalism, maldevelopment and violence can also be seen in the fact that eighty percent of scientific research is "devoted to the war industry, and is frankly aimed directly at lethal violence."³²

In spite of the destruction caused by maldevelopment the followers of science and capitalism continue to offer technical solutions to environmental

problems. They fail to recognize that science, technology and capitalism often create problems rather than solutions.³³ For instance, they cite the growing population of the Third World as a major cause of environmental degradation rather than the more important factors of over-consumption in the North and West and maldevelopment propagated by the economic and political systems created by the influence of the North and West.³⁴

Vision

Shiva argues that as separate movements Western feminism and environmentalism fail to challenge maldevelopment which oppresses both women and nature. She offers, as an alternative to these inadequate movements, a trans-gender feminism being created primarily through the practice of women environmental activists in the Third World.³⁵

They are creating a feminist ideology that transcends gender and a political power that is humanly inclusive; they are challenging patriarchy's ideological claim to universalism not with another universalizing tendency, but with diversity; and they are challenging the domination concept of power as violence with the alternative of non-violence as power.³⁶

This ecological, trans-gender feminism is based in the ancient Indian world view that knows nature as "Prakriti, a living and creative process, the feminine principle from which all life arises."³⁷ An everyday concept characterized by creativity, productivity, diversity and the inter-relationship and

sacredness of all life, Prakriti is, according to Shiva, rooted in respect for life and sustenance, not in gender.³⁸

The ecological feminism these women are building calls for the transformation of patriarchal, capitalist world views and lifestyles, but it offers liberation and survival to all.³⁹

The intellectual heritage for ecological survival lies with those who are experts in survival. They have the knowledge and experience to extricate us from the ecological cul-de-sac that the western masculinist mind has manoeuvred us into. And while Third World women have privileged access to survival expertise, the knowledge is inclusive, not exclusive. The ecological categories with which they think can become the categories of liberation for all, for men as well as for women, for the west as well as the non-west, and for the human as well as the non-human elements of the earth.⁴⁰

Comments and Criticism

Vandana Shiva recognizes the problem of dualistic thinking and avoids it in her own work with one exception. Shiva's description of Prakriti as the feminine principle suggests that she has made the essentialist assumption that men and women have separate essences. At one point Shiva notes that some men of the rural Third World are closer to nature than most women in urban areas and in First World countries, but then she turns around and defines Prakriti as the feminine principle. She claims that Prakriti has its basis in valuing all life and not in gender, but her definition of it as the feminine

principle belies that claim. The definition suggests that women essentially value creativity, diversity and the inter-relationship and sacredness of all life more than men do, and are therefore closer to nature than men.⁴¹

Shiva unfortunately compares the best of the Third World to the worst of the West, overlooking the similarities between Western ecofeminist theory and her own theory. However, she does not have a dualistic view of the First World and the Third World. She uses these terms to emphasize the different experiences and world views of people, not to suggest that the people of the First World and the Third World have separate, dichotomous essences of differing value. She does believe that the new paradigm being created primarily by women of the Third World is better than the predominant Western paradigm, but recognizing one alternative as better than another is not necessarily dualistic. Remember that the discussion of dualism in Chapter One included the recognition that mutually exclusive situations or points of view do exist. In this case, a dualistic world view and a non-dualistic world view are truly mutually exclusive.

Shiva carefully documents the connections among dualistic thought, patriarchy, capitalism, science, imperialism and maldevelopment, and she explains how these systems work to oppress the earth, women and the people

of the Third World. Her work offers women all over the world an opportunity to better understand the systems that oppress us, and, therefore, improves our ability to work toward our own empowerment. Among the most important connections Shiva makes is the recognition that women who live close to the earth in India and elsewhere already have the tremendous power to teach and save us all.

Part Three

Ynestra King

Background

Ynestra King, an ecofeminist theorist, writer, teacher and activist, began writing and teaching classes on feminism and ecology at the Institute for Social Ecology in 1976.⁴² A graduate student in feminist theory at Amherst, Massachusetts, in 1979 when the Three Mile Island meltdown occurred, she became the key organizer of the "Women and Life on Earth Conference" that took place in Amherst in 1980. She participated in the planning and actions of the WPA.⁴³ She writes and teaches about women, peace and ecology, and she has spoken about these topics throughout Europe and the United States. She is writing a book called Ecofeminism and the Reenchantment of Nature.⁴⁴

Connections and Explanations

For Ynestra King ecofeminism begins with the recognition of important connections between nature and women. Those connections can be found in thought, culture and the daily activities of women. As we saw in Chapter One, dualistic thinking justifies the oppression of women and of nature. It assumes that women are closer to nature than men. This assumption causes

the hatred of women and the hatred of nature to reinforce one another. King says that women have a special interest in ending the hatred and domination of nature because it reinforces the hatred and domination of women.⁴⁵

King notes that dualism also fosters race and class oppression by conceptually separating races and classes, valuing them differently and sanctioning domination.⁴⁶

King perceives in Western culture a "deep ambivalence about life itself, our own fertility and that of nonhuman nature, and a terrible confusion about our place in nature."⁴⁷ Our society demonstrates that ambivalence when it celebrates violence and devalues the giving of life. It can be seen in corporate and technological threats to the well-being of the earth, in the development of nuclear weapons that could annihilate the earth and in attempts to deny women the right to their own bodies.⁴⁸ This cultural ambivalence about life itself, which is entrenched in society's political, economic and legal systems, challenges both the ecology movement and the feminist movement, linking them together in the attempt to confront it.⁴⁹

The daily activities of women also connect us to nature. Patriarchal tradition has categorized many of women's activities, such as bearing and rearing children, cooking, nursing, farming and searching for food, as natural.

Feminism has largely tried to demonstrate that these activities are cultural.

But King notes that these activities are both cultural and natural. They place women at the point where nature and culture intersect:

the process of nurturing an unsocialized, undifferentiated human infant into an adult person--the socialization of the organic--is the bridge between nature and culture.⁵⁰

King believes that we must turn to ecofeminist theory and action to survive:

At this point in history, the domination of nature is inextricably bound up with the domination of persons, and both must be addressed . . . there is no point in liberating people if the planet cannot sustain their liberated lives or in saving the planet by disregarding the preciousness of human existence, not only to ourselves but to the rest of life on earth.⁵¹

Vision

Having located one of the connections between women and nature in dualistic thought, King observes that ecology and the four traditional forms of feminism fail to deal adequately with dualism. Chapter One outlined how liberal, radical, Marxist and socialist feminism fail to move beyond nature/culture dualism. In a similar way, ecology does not move beyond man/woman dualism.

For King, one of the strengths of ecofeminism is its ability to embrace the key methods and insights of other feminist theories. Her vision for

ecofeminism is that it can appreciate history like socialist feminism and mystery like cultural feminism, bringing together the spiritual and the material, being and knowing.⁵²

King makes it clear that nature is the central category of analysis in ecofeminism. The domination of nature comes in three forms: the domination of persons by other persons, the domination of nonhuman nature by humans and the domination of inner nature. Although King's concept of the oppression of persons and nature are clear, she has not yet explained her understanding of the domination of inner nature, or even identified who or what dominates inner nature; perhaps this concept will be clarified in her forthcoming book Ecofeminism and the Reenchantment of Nature. King defines ecofeminist theory as the analysis of the three forms of the domination of nature and the ways they affect women.⁵³

King describes four basic beliefs of ecofeminism:

1. The building of Western industrial civilization in opposition to nature interacts dialectically with and reinforces the subjugation of women, because women are believed to be closer to nature. Therefore, ecofeminists take on the life-struggles of all of nature as our own.

2. Life on earth is an interconnected web, not a hierarchy. There is no natural hierarchy; human hierarchy is projected onto nature and then used to justify social domination. Therefore, ecofeminist theory seeks to show the connections between all

forms of domination, including the domination of nonhuman nature, and ecofeminist practice is necessarily antihierarchical.⁵⁴

3. A healthy, balanced ecosystem, including human and nonhuman inhabitants, must maintain diversity. Ecologically, environmental simplification is as significant a problem as environmental pollution. Biological simplification, i.e., the wiping out of whole species, corresponds to reducing human diversity into faceless workers, or to the homogenization of taste and culture through mass consumer markets. Social life and natural life are literally simplified to the inorganic for the convenience of market society. Therefore we need a decentralized global movement that is founded on common interests yet celebrates diversity and opposes all forms of domination and violence. Potentially, ecofeminism is such a movement.

4. The survival of the species necessitates a renewed understanding of our relationship to nature, of our own bodily nature, and of nonhuman nature around us; it necessitates a challenging of the nature-culture dualism and a corresponding radical restructuring of human society according to feminist and ecological principles.⁵⁵

While King carefully defines ecofeminism and explains her theory, she is also an activist. She recognizes that theory does not always translate easily into practice, but that theory often follows practice, trying to express the understanding behind actions people are taking already. For King the vision of ecofeminism and its politics must be joined. Praxis is central; people must "take direct action to effect changes that are immediate and personal as well as long term and structural."⁵⁶

As an activist, King understands ecofeminism not only as a theory but also as a popular movement that grew out of women's study and action groups around the country.⁵⁷ While her early vision was one of women acting separately from men, she recognizes that ecofeminists today take part in mixed movements against nuclear weapons and toxic waste, as well as those for peace, occupational safety, appropriate technology and organic farming. Ecofeminists confront sexism within these movements and point out connections between women, nature and peace.⁵⁸

Comments and Criticism

King's earliest work shows traces of a man/woman dualism that values women above men, as did the WPA, but her later work rejects essentialism. She finds the links between women and nature in culture, thought and daily activity, not in the essential nature of women. This rejection of the essentialist assumption probably comes from her understanding of dualism not only as a conceptual root of the oppression of women and of nature but also as a pattern of thought that prevents traditional forms of feminism from adequately dealing with ecological problems. She recognizes that when feminism has conceived of men and women as essentially different, it has only reversed a traditional dualism and failed to recognize the causal relationship

between dualism and oppression. Having made those connections, she carefully avoids dualism.

In the effort to avoid dualism King completely rejects the concept of hierarchy. She states that no natural hierarchy exists without explaining how such an assumption fits with the facts that some beings are more complex than others and that living animals eat living plants and other living animals. King is correct in the sense that the word "hierarchy" implies difference in value, but to avoid confusion, she should offer alternative language to describe the ways in which members of the web of life sometimes interact.

The empowerment offered women by King's theory of ecofeminism is not as tangible as the empowerment offered by Maathai and Shiva. King's connections dwell on the relationship between women and nature, the problem of dualism and the versatility of nature as a central category of analysis. She does not discuss how specific systems oppress women and nature, nor does she outline steps that women should take to struggle against oppression. King says that ecofeminists work in many movements to end the oppression of the earth and that they struggle against sexism within those movements. But this comment betrays one of her major points: other ecological movements do not reject man/woman dualism. While this

observation should prompt King to suggest specific actions that ecofeminists should take within or apart from other movements, she fails to do so. The empowerment her theory does offer lies in the recognition of ecofeminism as a theory and way of life that rejects all forms of oppression and can liberate women from multiple oppressions.

Part Four

Observations

In comparing and contrasting these three theories and the empowerment they offer women, attention must be given to the different backgrounds of the three theorists. Maathai and Shiva differ from King not only in that they come from countries where they witness the disastrous effects of maldevelopment daily but also in that they studied science while King studied feminist theory. Because of their background, Maathai and Shiva take maldevelopment as their central concern. King's central concern is harder to pinpoint, but it may be the problem of dualistic thinking, especially as it relates to ecofeminism and other feminist theories.

Because they help determine the central theoretical concerns of these theorists, their backgrounds also affect the way in which their theories offer empowerment to women. The theories of Maathai and Shiva offer empowerment to women by calling them to participate in creating a form of sustainable development rather than accepting the poverty and destruction caused by unsustainable maldevelopment. Because she centers on a problem of thought King's theory offers empowerment by calling us to change the way

we think. Women find empowerment as we reject dualism and recognize that all oppression is connected.

When I began my study of ecofeminism, Ynestra King's theory excited me more than the others I had read. But once I had embraced her arguments that the acceptance of dualism limits traditional feminism and that ecofeminism challenges all forms of oppression, once my mind stretched to understand those concepts, I found even more exciting Vandana Shiva's clear connections among oppressive systems and her explanations of how those systems affect the earth, women and the lives of people in the Third World. I was able to read past the essentialist term "feminine principle" in Staying Alive and appreciate the insight of this Indian woman with a background in theoretical physics who gets her inspiration from uneducated Chipko women and who has not been afraid to criticize science, capitalism, patriarchy, progress and development.

Review

This chapter discussed the theories of Wangari Maathai, Vandana Shiva and Ynestra King. In doing so it identified the backgrounds, connections, explanations and visions of each of these theorists. It noted that the education and cultural background of these women and their experiences

with the Green Belt Movement, Chipko and the Women's Pentagon Actions influenced their theories. Chapter Four will introduce my own understanding of ecofeminist theory in much the same way this chapter discussed the theories of Maathai, Shiva and King: by describing my own background, connections, explanations and visions.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ECOFEMINIST ALTERNATIVE

In Chapter Four I express my own understanding of ecofeminist theory. I begin with a discussion of my own background and note that the connections and explanations I make are largely described in the work of other ecofeminists. Then I describe the new connections ecofeminism will make as it gives serious consideration to the implications of rejecting dualism. I will draw on this description and on some of the observations made in Chapters Two and Three to explain why I believe that contemporary proponents of traditional feminist theories should contribute to ecofeminist theory and embrace it as their own. I also offer some cautions for ecofeminist theorists. Finally, I describe the actions I believe ecofeminism demands and my own vision of an ecofeminist world.

Background, Connections and Explanations

I came to the Justice and Peace Program at Incarnate Word College with a Christian concern for justice rooted in feminist and liberation theology, a bit of creation spirituality, and several experiences of working with disempowered people. I was already making connections among the many forms of oppression and the multiple tools of oppression. The program

helped me sharpen my understanding of how the connections work, but it also led me to a paradigm shift. I came to recognize that traditional Christian doctrine, no matter how much liberation theology I piled on top of it, is too exclusive for me to accept.

Having made that new connection, I needed a new framework on which to hang my dedication to justice. The framework also needed to support the systemic explanations of oppression I had come to recognize, to help me discover new explanations and to give me vision and direction for action. I turned first to feminism, but found that traditional forms of feminism did not make all the connections I was making. I had a hunch that ecofeminism was worth exploring--at least it included two of my major concerns, women and ecology. I started an independent study, moved on to write this thesis and ended with the framework for which I had been seeking. In other words, writing this thesis has been an empowering experience for me. It has helped me make connections, explain them, envision and prepare for action.

Ecofeminists such as Ynestra King, Karen Warren and especially Vandana Shiva do a good job of making the connections and explaining the problems with which I am concerned. They do not, however, give much

attention to the actions that ecofeminists in the United States can take to build a sustainable world that is free of oppression. Therefore, I will turn my attention to the issue of ecofeminist action later in this Chapter. But now I turn to the new connections ecofeminists will make as we explore the implications of rejecting dualism and challenging all oppression.

New Connections for Ecofeminist Theory

Ecofeminism is the form of feminism that empowers women by first recognizing that the oppression of women and the oppression of nature are linked and then rejecting the dualism behind both of those oppressions. As Chapter One noted, current ecofeminist theory focuses on the rejection of man/woman and nature/culture dualism. But I believe ecofeminist theorists are on the brink of rejecting all dualism and, therefore, all oppression. Ynestra King and Karen Warren, for example, both describe ecofeminism as the rejection of all oppression.¹

Ecofeminists reject all oppression for two reasons. First, they recognize that the different types of oppression are rooted in dualistic thinking, and having rejected dualism, they reject oppression as well. Second, they recognize that humans are part of nature, so in rejecting the oppression of nature they reject all oppression of humans by other humans.

In searching for the answer to the question, "What is the primary cause of the oppression of women and the oppression of nature?" ecofeminists found the answer to the question, "What is the root of all oppression?" The answer, of course, is dualism. As ecofeminists explore the implications of that answer, I believe that ecofeminist theory will become a "pan-liberationist" theory that not only rejects all oppression but also moves beyond debates about which form of oppression came first historically, gave rise to other forms of oppression and, therefore, must be eradicated first. Rejecting dualism enables ecofeminists to move beyond the hierarchical notion that one form of oppression is worse than another. The recognition that all oppression is linked in dualism suggests that work to end one form of oppression can contribute to the eradication of other forms of oppression.² Women in the Green Belt Movement and the Chipko movement demonstrate this fact: their work to end the oppression of nature has contributed to their empowerment as women.

Empowerment takes place as women and men and children struggle in their daily lives against the forms of oppression that most affect and concern them. This emerging "pan-liberationist" ecofeminism values each person's struggle against the form of oppression that most affects and concerns that

person *as long as that struggle does not contribute to other forms of oppression.*³

This emerging ecofeminism values the struggles of women whose first concern may be racism or poverty or heterosexism or survival rather than women's rights, women's culture or ending the oppression of nature. However, combatting sexism in one's life by building nuclear weapons or climbing the ladder of a corporation that operates maquiladoras, that is sweat shops, in other countries does not measure up to this vision of a "pan-liberationist" ecofeminism. Making such career choices to combat sexism in one's own life is an example of struggling against one form of oppression while contributing to others.

While this emerging ecofeminism rejects the notion that one form of oppression is worse than another, it also recognizes that if nature is oppressed to the point that the earth cannot sustain human life, then we will no longer be able to struggle against any type of oppression. Therefore, some ecofeminists might argue that the earth is in such danger that we all must put our primary focus on ending the oppression of nature so that we can survive long enough to struggle against other forms of oppression. I do not perceive the earth to be presently in such danger that the struggle to end the oppression of nature must take precedence over struggles to end other forms

of oppression. Instead, I believe that if people struggling against racism, sexism or heterosexism recognize the link between their own oppression, the oppression of others and the oppression of nature, then, as they find empowerment, they will use their power to contribute to the eradication of other forms of oppression, including the oppression of nature.

The Inclusivity and Sustainability of Ecofeminism

When I say that I believe that contemporary proponents of traditional feminist theories should contribute to ecofeminist theory and accept it as their own, I am referring to this emerging ecofeminism which values all struggle against oppression. To demonstrate that feminists should embrace ecofeminism I must make three points. First, I must demonstrate that ecofeminism is a unique feminist theory. Second, I must identify the qualities that would make one form of feminism preferable to another, and third, I must demonstrate that ecofeminism possesses those qualities to a greater extent than other feminist theories.

Chapter One demonstrated that ecofeminism is a unique feminist theory and defined feminism as the empowerment of women. If that definition is accepted, then it follows that we will prefer an inclusive feminism, one that offers empowerment to diverse women, to a feminism that excludes

some women from empowerment. Furthermore, we will prefer a feminism that sustains the earth to one that contributes to--or fails to struggle against--the demise of the earth. Such a feminism is preferable because if the earth is not sustained, then feminism cannot be sustained on the earth. Women will be dead instead of empowered.

Having established that ecofeminism is a unique feminist theory and that inclusivity and sustainability are the qualities that would make one feminist theory preferable to another, I must now demonstrate that ecofeminist theory is more inclusive and sustainable than other feminist theories.

As the only form of feminism that inherently rejects the oppression of nature, ecofeminism is clearly the most sustainable feminist theory. Other forms of feminism can take on environmental concerns, but those concerns are not inherent. A woman can be a liberal, radical, Marxist or socialist feminist without being concerned about the environment. But even an ecofeminist whose first concern is race or class will recognize the problem of the oppression of the nature. At a minimum she will refuse to contribute to that oppression. Because ecofeminism inherently rejects the oppression of

nature it is the most likely form of feminism to contribute to the sustainability of the earth and therefore the most likely to be sustained on the earth.

As I demonstrated above, the rejection of dualism and of all oppression leads ecofeminism to be extremely inclusive. Ecofeminism moves beyond arguments about which form of oppression is the worst, and in doing so it can value and include women whose first concern is neither women's rights, women's roles, women's culture nor ending the oppression of nature. Therefore, ecofeminism has a greater potential to include poor women, women of color and women who are not from the West than do other feminist theories which do not reject dualism and have been criticized for excluding the concerns of many women.

In addition to including women concerned with different forms of oppression, ecofeminism can also include women concerned with different methods or tools of oppression. Ecofeminists recognize that maldevelopment and science are important tools of oppression, but they also recognize that other feminist theories have identified significant tools of oppression such as the separation of spheres, the patriarchal construction of gender and capitalism. By observing that dualistic thinking lies behind the separation of spheres, the patriarchal construction of gender and capitalism, ecofeminism

takes us one step beyond other feminist theories. In doing so, it opens space in which liberal, radical, Marxist and socialist feminists can come to a deeper analysis of dualism and a better appreciation of one another's contribution to the understanding and elimination of specific tools of oppression. In other words, ecofeminist theory benefits from the work of liberal, radical, Marxist and socialist feminists, and it can include those feminists when they reject all dualism and oppression.

Ecofeminism can consider itself a daughter of radical and socialist feminism and a granddaughter of liberal and Marxist feminism. Ecofeminists must continue to use the political power won by liberal feminists and increase that power, but it must be used to make ecofeminist goals real. From Marxist and socialist feminism ecofeminists can learn a critical view of capitalism and sensitivity to classism. Ecofeminists can learn from radical separatism how to stop collaborating with oppressive systems by changing our lifestyles, values, and goals. But ecofeminists must use separation from those systems as a place from which to continue to challenge them, and not attempt to create by our separation an imaginary, unsustainable place of escape.

Ecofeminism is inclusive not only because its analysis of dualism leads it to include women with concerns about different forms of oppression and

different methods of oppression, but also because of its attention to nature. That attention to nature causes ecofeminism to place value on diversity and interdependence. Ecologists and geneticists tell us, and indigenous peoples who still live close to the earth have tried to teach us, that greater diversity within a species and within an ecological web improve the odds of survival. The interdependent members of the web share their diverse strengths and reduce the effects of each others' weaknesses. Of course, ecofeminism must qualify the value it places on diversity with its commitment to reject all forms of oppression. In other words, the diversity of ecofeminism does not include a place for neo-nazi beliefs or even for subtler unfounded prejudices.

Because ecofeminism places inherent, if qualified, value on diversity, rejects all forms of oppression and can challenge various tools of oppression, its potential for inclusivity is greater than that of other forms of feminism. It has the capability to include, reach out to, and especially learn from different forms of feminist theory, and from women of the two-thirds world, women who are poor and women of different ethnic and racial backgrounds. By helping women of diverse cultures learn from one another, especially by encouraging Western women to learn from women of other cultures who have

vastly different knowledge and experience, ecofeminism promotes greater equality and mutual respect among women.

Because it has the potential to reach out to so many women--women in Kenya and India, Harlem and Manhattan, Normal, Illinois and East Los Angeles, ecofeminism offers empowerment to more women than traditional forms of feminism. Furthermore, by opposing all forms of oppression, it offers more complete empowerment to women who live under multiple oppressions.

Ecofeminism offers more empowerment to more women and it offers sustainability of the earth and of feminism on the earth. For these reasons I believe that contemporary proponents of other feminist theories should embrace ecofeminist theory, recognizing it as a theory that can include their own insights but which moves beyond traditional theories in its analysis of dualism, its understanding of the tools of oppression and its challenge to all oppression including the oppression of women. I suggest that feminists embrace ecofeminist theory rather than incorporate it into their own theories because I believe that once a feminist accepts the crucial insights of ecofeminism she will no longer be a liberal, radical, Marxist or socialist feminist. When she comes to understand dualism as the root of all

oppression including the oppression of women she will note that neither the separation of spheres, the patriarchal construction of gender, capitalism nor capitalist patriarchy is the primary cause of the oppression of women. She will recognize that these systems are among many *tools* of oppression.

Because recognition of one or more of those systems as the primary cause of oppression is basic to what it means to be a liberal, radical, Marxist or socialist feminist, she will have moved beyond those forms of feminism.

However, she may incorporate many of the insights of her former theory into ecofeminism.

Cautions

Ecofeminists must watch for two problems that emerge when we do not completely reject dualism. First, the rejection of all oppression is tied to our rejection of dualism, so when we do not completely reject dualism, we do not offer liberation to women who live under multiple oppressions. Second, we must avoid creating a separatist movement. Ecofeminism offers a place for some separate women's actions, such as a space in which women can heal or an action that chooses separatism as a temporary strategy to empower women or to make a point. However, we must also have mixed actions and work toward a time when all actions can be mixed, because when we reject

dualism, especially when we reject the assumptions that men and women have separate and dichotomous essences, we reject the basis of separatism.

Ecofeminists must avoid being overly theoretical, symbolic and spiritual at the expense of direct material action that changes their daily lives and the oppressive systems they confront. A movement like the WPA may be inspiring and yield some promising results, but it takes untiring direct action like the action of the GBM and Chipko women to assure sustainability and to grow the kind of world we envision.

Finally, ecofeminists must avoid oversimplifying the relationship between humans and nature. We should not eat only grass just because cows do, or eat meat just because cats do. We should not kill our unhealthy babies because some species let runts die, and women should not kill men after mating just because black widow spiders do. The relationship between nature and humans, who are nature too, is much more complicated than that. We cannot turn to other species in a simplistic way to support the values we set for ourselves or to excuse our immoral behavior.

Actions For Ecofeminist Women in the United States

As women in the United States we must begin our ecofeminist activism by ending our own collaboration with oppressive structures. We must make

sacrifices and struggle for ecofeminist ideals in our everyday lives. We have to change our lifestyles, live more simply, give up consumerism, use public transportation systems more often and explore communal living situations that enable us to use less of the earth's resources per person. We must look deep inside ourselves to confront our own ungrounded prejudices and to challenge our own assumptions that capitalism, science, technology, progress and development are inherently good and universally valued. Many of us will have to quit our jobs and find new, creative ways to support ourselves and our movement.

Some of us have already begun this process, but many more of us are either battling one form of oppression while collaborating with another or enabling bad systems to continue by putting band-aids on broken limbs. To some women who experience ecofeminist consciousness raising, it will be clear that they must change careers and lifestyles. To others, though, especially those who contribute to the continuation of bad systems even as they try to mend the wounds caused by those systems, the path may not be so clear. Women in education, social services and physical, mental and spiritual health care must look seriously at the role they play in the structures of oppression. In their particular place of employment, is there room for them to challenge

oppressive structures in addition to dealing with the ignorance, pain and violence oppression causes?

The actions recommended here are revolutionary. When we leave our jobs and forsake consumerism, other people will lose their jobs. When we articulate the connections and explanations that seem clear to us, people will resent our threatening their paradigms, our challenging the very way in which they understand themselves and the world. Our nonviolent revolution will cause a violent backlash, so we need to be prepared to deal with that backlash through nonviolent means. Meanwhile, we must build new systems and structures, new jobs and paradigms, to take the place of the old ones. This part of the ecofeminist call, the process of construction, will be at least as difficult as the process of leaving and struggling against the old oppressive structures.

Poor women, minority women and less educated women have fewer options than some of us, and they will find it harder, more threatening, to quit jobs or otherwise extricate themselves from systems that cause oppression. Rather than merely criticize these women, we must recognize that they can teach us what we did not even know we needed to learn. We must listen to them and to the women of the two-thirds world who still know how to live

with the earth. Together we can create alternatives that include a place for all women and men and children and nature.

Vision

What would those ecofeminist alternatives with a place for all look like? Because moving to such alternatives will involve a profound paradigm shift, we cannot yet see it clearly. It is a vision that must belong to many women from many backgrounds and cultures. For these reasons my vision is incomplete and somewhat utopian, but I will describe it here in its limited form.

Ecofeminism will change the way we think about ourselves and how we feel about our bodies and the world around us. We will be more comfortable in our bodies and understand more fully what it means to be natural as well as cultural. We will own our own bodies, so abortion will be legal but seldom needed or wanted.

An ecofeminist world will be very decentralized in comparison to our current structures, especially in terms of politics and economics. Foreign policy will mean offering personal, informational and financial support to other groups who want to develop their own visions and systems, as long as those visions and systems are not oppressive.

There will be less stuff in an ecofeminist world. We will not want or need or buy or make as much. We will keep some of the "advancements" science and technology have given us, but only after carefully weighing the cost of keeping them. We will keep them because they truly improve the quality of all life--not just human life--and not because they make life more comfortable, more profitable, more entertaining. The hardest decisions about what to keep will be those that confront technologies and research that save lives. In making those decisions we will have to remember that many more beings suffer and die of diseases and disasters that we can stop than of those we do not know how to stop.

There will be less stuff but more life: water and soil and grass and trees and bugs and animals. We will all know the feeling of rich soil in our hands and how fresh vegetables taste without chemical fertilizers, pesticides and color enhancers. We will all know and respect the ways of other peoples and other species.

More specifically, I envision a world-web of small, communal farms. Each farm will have one van and enough information technology to be attached to the rest of the world. The main source of energy for most of these communities will be the sun. Gardens, animals, and woods will provide

for subsistence. Excess will be shared by all or saved to benefit everyone in lean times.

The farms might support small businesses belonging to people who weave cloth, make clothes and grind grain. Educators, healers and technicians will live on these farms and work in facilities that serve a network of farms. But these specialists will also know how the sun feels on their backs, how rich soil feels in their hands and that they depend on those who produce food and clothes and shelter and home.

Violence and war will be no more, and when some are starving, others will share, even if they must go a little bit hungry, too. Laws, or conduct, will be enforced much like the women in Gopeshwar protect the trees, by coming to mutually agreed upon codes of conduct and exacting small but serious punishments when people break those codes.

Admittedly, it is a utopian vision. But that does not mean we cannot or should not strive for it. Some will perceive my vision as regression. Giving up on progress. But it is really the only way to go forward, to continue living. We must take radical actions such as those I propose to survive as a species and to protect the life of this planet. We must take such actions to end oppression.

Others will say that the idea is fine but too dangerous to attempt because we do not know if it will work, or how it will work, or exactly how we can get there. I say that we know what we have will not work, will not survive. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain, so we owe it to ourselves, to one another, to the earth and to the web of life to try.

ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS

In this thesis I have demonstrated that ecofeminism is a new form of feminism that rejects dualism and oppression and makes connections and explanations that other forms of feminism overlook. I have explored ecofeminist movements in three countries and the theory of three women associated with those movements. Drawing on observations about those movements and theories and on a description of the new connections ecofeminism makes by rejecting dualism, I have argued that in the interests of survival and of providing more complete empowerment to more women, feminists should embrace ecofeminism. Finally, I have described the actions called for by ecofeminism and my own vision of an ecofeminist future.

This study of ecofeminist practice and theory has led me to several other conclusions. I have argued that ecofeminism opposes all forms of oppression. It is not dualistic or separatist. This observation combined with examples from Kenya and India teach us that women can empower themselves in mixed movements and even in movements that do not take women's rights, women's roles or women's culture as their first concern. I have noted that ecofeminism values diversity and promotes equality and mutual respect among women. It reminds us that we can all learn from one

another, and especially that Western women who call themselves feminists can learn much from women whose experiences have given them knowledge and power very different from our own. Finally, I have come to the conclusion that to move forward, to survive, we must take radical, daily, material actions. We must learn from our courageous sisters in Kenya and India how to change ourselves, our systems and our world.

Important suggestions for future projects emerge from this thesis. For example, the arguments here could be strengthened by a study demonstrating that those theories sometimes called "ecofeminist" which fail to challenge dualism are theories that make fewer connections, that choose less complete explanations, that are more exclusive and that do not offer as much empowerment to as many women. Another study might consider the impact of ecofeminism on the field of feminist theory; an exploration of womanism and ecofeminism might be especially interesting. Studies might use interviews with activist women in different cultures as a method of exploring the process through which they empower themselves. Such studies would invite women to tell their own stories of making connections, explaining, envisioning and acting. Because ecofeminism seeks to contribute to the sustainability of the earth, studies which examine it from an ecological point of view will be of extreme

importance. Other projects could focus on the concept of feminist science and on how feminists and ecofeminists in the sciences can contribute to ecofeminist theory and practice.

Finally, I believe that greater attention must be given to the specific methods we can use to live creatively, to build new systems of thought, science, economy and politics and to develop new ways of relating to the earth, to other species and to each other. The Women's Pentagon Action and Ynestra King give us some clues as to what some of those specific methods might be, but Wangari Maathai, the Green Belt Movement, Vandana Shiva and Chipko with their two-thirds world view and emphasis on direct action and daily life give us even more clues.

My next project is to find a volunteer job in Latin America where I hope not only to challenge oppression but also to learn the kinds of lessons that Vandana Shiva learned from the women of Chipko. I anticipate that this action will lead me to new connections, explanations and visions. I yearn for it to rouse me to revolutionary ecofeminist action and to inspire me to build creative ecofeminist alternatives.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER ONE

¹Note the similarity of this circle to the "Pastoral Circle" or "Circle of Praxis" described by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot in Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice. In the Circle of Praxis, social analysis equals making connections and seeking explanations; theological reflection and pastoral planning are the same thing as making predictions, and insertion equals taking action. Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, S.J., Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1983), pp. 7-9.

²My understanding of these feminist theories comes largely from Rosemarie Tong, Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1989).

³Carolyn Merchant, Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1992), p. 184; Carolyn Merchant, "Viewpoint: Perspectives on Ecofeminism," Environmental Action 24.2 (Summer 1992), p. 18; Carolyn Merchant, "Ecofeminism and Feminist Theory," Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism, ed. Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1990), p. 100.

⁴Merchant, Radical Ecology, p. 186.

⁵Ibid., pp. 190-191.

⁶Merchant, "Viewpoint," p. 18; "Ecofeminism " p. 103 ff.; Radical Ecology, p. 195 ff.

⁷Merchant, Radical Ecology, p. 194.

⁸Ynestra King, "Healing the Wounds: Feminism, Ecology, and Nature/Culture Dualism," in Gender/Body/Knowledge, ed. Alison Jagger and Susan Bordo (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1989), pp. 118-129; Karen Warren, "The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism," Environmental Ethics 12.2 (1990), pp. 126-132; Karen Warren, "Feminism and Ecology: Making Connections," Environmental Ethics 9 (Spring 1987), pp. 3-17.

⁹Writing about ecofeminism is diverse, and some of the literature does not reject either man/woman or nature/culture dualism. However, both Warren and King reject it, and ecofeminist theorists such as Catherine Roach and Christine Cuomo have criticized theories that fail to reject it. Catherine Roach, "Loving Your Mother: On the Woman-Nature Relation," Hypatia 6.1 (Special Issue on Ecological Feminism 1991), pp. 52-54; Christine J. Cuomo, "Unravelling the Problems in Ecofeminism," Environmental Ethics 14.4 (Winter 1992), pp. 352, 359-362.

¹⁰This definition of dualism and its assumptions grew out of careful consideration of Karen Warren's discussion of "oppressive conceptual frameworks" in the works cited above and out of the struggle my thesis director Dr. Dorothy A. Haecker and I shared in determining the relationship between essentialism and dualism. The relationship was confusing and difficult to articulate because cultural feminists are usually criticized for being essentialist, not dualistic, in their view of men and women. In the terms of this definition, however, cultural feminists make not only the essentialist

assumption but also the dichotomous, hierarchical and associational assumptions; they only invert the traditional dualism. Essentialism is only the first step in dualistic thinking.

¹¹King, "Healing the Wounds," in Gender, p. 115.

¹²Warren, "Power and Promise," pp. 127-132; "Feminism and Ecology," p. 18.

¹³Because the word "hierarchy" implies difference of value, using it to describe relationships in nature is problematical, but I use it here in the absence of a better term.

¹⁴King, "Healing the Wounds," in Gender, pp. 120-123; "Feminism and the Revolt of Nature," Heresies 4.1 (#13 Feminism and Ecology, 1981), p. 14. Although King is cited here and below, Warren makes the same basic points about the failure of traditional feminist theories to reject culture/nature dualism.

¹⁵King, "Feminism and Revolt," p. 12.

¹⁶King, "Healing the Wounds," in Gender, pp. 128-129. Because Carolyn Merchant's version of socialist ecofeminism challenges the idea that humans can oppress nature to advance themselves, her vision of socialist ecofeminism is very similar to King's and Warren's visions of ecofeminism.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 124.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER TWO

¹Vandana Shiva, Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development (London: Zed, 1988), p. 40.

²Harriet Hyman Alonso, Peace as a Women's Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1993), p. 246.

³Wangari Maathai, The Green Belt Movement: Sharing the Approach and the Experience (Nairobi, Kenya: Environmental Liason Centre International, 1988), pp. 6-7.

⁴Aubrey Wallace, "Sowing Seeds of Hope: Wangari Maathai, Kenya" in Eco-Heroes (San Francisco: Mercury, 1993), p. 5; Maathai, GBM, pp. 15, 39.

⁵Maathai, GBM, pp. 9-24.

⁶Wangari Maathai, Interview by Maggie Jones, "Greening the Desert" in Reclaim the Earth: Women Speak Out For Life On Earth, ed. Leonie Caldecott and Stephanie Leland (London: Women's Press, 1983), p. 113.

⁷Maathai, GBM, pp. 43-54.

⁸Wangari Maathai, "Kenya's Green Belt Movement," UNESCO Courier, (March 1992), p. 24; Wallace, p. 6; Maathai, GBM, pp. 28-29.

⁹Maathai, GBM, pp. 26-31; Wallace, p. 6.

¹⁰Maathai, Interview by Jones, p. 114; Maathai, GBM, p. 9.

¹¹Maathai, GBM, pp. 31-33; according to Wallace, page 5, ninety percent of the funding comes from abroad, primarily in small checks from women all over the world.

¹²Maathai, GBM, pp. 31-32.

¹³Wangari Maathai, "Foresters Without Diplomas," Ms. 1.5 (March-April 1991), p. 74; Wallace, p. 7.

¹⁴Maathai, GBM, pp. 33-39.

¹⁵Wallace, p. 13-14, 16.

¹⁶Maathai, GBM, p. 30.

¹⁷Wangari Maathai, Interview by Daphne Topouzis, "Empowering the Grassroots," Africa Report, 35.5 (Nov.-Dec. 1990), p. 31; Wallace, pp. 2, 7.

¹⁸Maathai, GBM, p. 9; Wallace, pp. 2, 7-8, 16; Maathai, "Foresters," p. 75.

¹⁹Maathai, GBM, p. 13; Maathai, Interview by Topouzis, p. 21

²⁰"Saviors of the Planet," Time (29 April 1991), p. 67; Maathai, Interview with Topouzis, p. 31; Wallace, p. 16.

²¹Shobita Jain, "Standing Up For Trees," in Women and the Environment: A Reader, ed. Sally Sontheimer (New York: Monthly Review, 1991), p. 165. Sources use different spellings for the names of Indian people

and villages; to make the spellings uniform, I have used the spellings found in the works of Vandana Shiva and Shobita Jain when possible.

²²Ibid., pp. 166-167.

²³Anita Anand, "Saving Trees, Saving Lives," in Reclaim the Earth, cited above, p. 183.

²⁴Vandana Shiva and Jayanta Bandyopadhyay, "The Evolution, Structure, and Impact of the Chipko Movement," Mountain Research and Development 6.2 (1986), p. 137.

²⁵Thomas Weber, Hugging The Trees: The Story of the Chipko Movement, (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 91-94; Shiva, Staying Alive, p. 67.

²⁶Jain, p. 166; Shiva, "Evolution," p. 135.

²⁷Jayanta Bandyopadhyay and Vandana Shiva, "Chipko: Rekindling India's Forest Culture," The Ecologist 17.1 (Jan.-Feb. 1987), pp. 28-29; Shiva, "Evolution," pp. 136-137; Shiva, Staying Alive pp. 71-72.

²⁸Radha Bhatt, "Lakshmi Ashram, A Gandhian Perspective in the Himalayan Foothills," in Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism, ed. Judith Plant (Philadelphia: New Society, 1989), p. 169.

²⁹Jain, pp. 169-170; Shiva, "Evolution," p. 140; Anand, p. 182.

³⁰Anand, pp. 182-183.

³¹Jain, pp. 169, 170, 173.

³²Pamela Philipose, "Women Act: Women and Environmental Protection in India," in Healing the Wounds, cited above, p. 68.

³³Weber, pp. 44-45.

³⁴Philipose, p. 69.

³⁵Shiva, "Evolution," pp. 133, 136-137.

³⁶Ibid., p. 137.

³⁷Philipose, p. 69.

³⁸Jain, pp. 171, 174.

³⁹I could not find a definition of "green felling", but Dr. Sean Cassidy and I believe it refers to *any* felling of living trees. Even indigenous people must meet their needs with already dead wood.

⁴⁰Weber, pp. 66, 94-95; Bandyopadhyay, "Chipko," pp. 147-148.

⁴¹Shiva, "Evolution," pp. 135-136; see also Philipose, p. 70.

⁴²Shiva, Staying Alive, p. 71; Anand, p. 188.

⁴³Shiva, "Evolution," p. 141.

⁴⁴Weber, pp. 94-95; Bandyopadhyay, "Chipko," pp. 30-31, 33-34.

⁴⁵Bandyopadhyay, "Chipko," p. 29.

⁴⁶Shiva, "Evolution," p. 140.

⁴⁷Jain, p. 165.

⁴⁸Bina Agarwal, "The Gender and Environment Debate: Lessons from India," Feminist Studies 13.1 (Spring 1992), pp. 146-148.

⁴⁹Jain, p. 175.

⁵⁰Philipose, p. 70.

⁵¹Jain, p. 165, 175.

⁵²Jain, pp. 163, 175, 177.

⁵³Ynestra King, "If I Can't Dance In Your Revolution, I'm Not Coming," in Rocking the Ship of State: Toward a Feminist Peace Politics, ed. Adrienne Harris and Ynestra King (Boulder: Westview, 1989), p. 284; Ynestra King, "What is Ecofeminism?" The Nation (12 Dec. 1987), p. 702.

⁵⁴Ynestra King, "The Eco-feminist Imperative," in Reclaim the Earth, cited above, p. 9.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 9-10; The Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice: Images and Writings, ed. Mima Cataldo, et. al. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), pp. 10-11.

⁵⁶Barbara Epstein, Political Protest and Cultural Revolution: Nonviolent Direct Action in the 1970s and 1980s (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991), pp. 165, 180-181; Alonso, p. 246.

⁵⁷Ynestra King, "All Is Connectedness," in Keeping the Peace: A Women's Peace Handbook 1, ed. Lynne Jones (London: Women's Press, 1983), pp. 40-41; Epstein, p. 161.

⁵⁸King, "All Is," p. 41. The phrase "male violence" shows that the women of the WPA had not moved beyond the problem of essentialism.

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 41, 44.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 44.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 45.

⁶²"Unity Statement of the Women's Pentagon Action, USA," in Reclaim the Earth, cited above, pp. 15-19.

⁶³Lindsay Van Gelder, "a 1960s Rebel Reviews the New Protesters," Ms. (Nov. 1981), p. 68; "Demonstration," New Yorker (8 Dec. 1980), p. 43.

⁶⁴Epstein, p. 165.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 180-181.

⁶⁶Lynne Breslawski, "We Are Gathering Because Life on the Precipice is Intolerable," New Women's Times (Jan. 1980), p. 12; "Demonstration," p. 43.

⁶⁷King, "All Is," p. 45; Breslawsky, p. 12.

⁶⁸During the 1981 action, the defiance puppet was black and the mourning puppet was white, the change was made out of sensitivity to the

concerns of black women; Rhoda Linton, "With Mourning, Rage, Empowerment and Defiance: The 1981 Women's Pentagon Action," Socialist Review 12.3-4 (May-Aug. 1982), p. 23.

⁶⁹Pam McCallister, You Can't Kill the Spirit (Philadelphia: New Society, 1991), p. 43; King, "All Is," p. 46.

⁷⁰King, "All Is," pp. 46, 48.

⁷¹King, "If I Can't Dance," p. 288.

⁷²King, "All Is," p. 48.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴McCallister, Spirit, p. 44; King, "If I Can't Dance," p. 288.

⁷⁵McCallister, Spirit, p. 44; King, "All Is," p. 49.

⁷⁶M.E. Donovan, "Pentagon Power," The Nation (6 Dec. 1980), p. 597; McCallister, Spirit, pp. 44-45; Epstein, p. 162; King, "All Is," p. 50; Breslawsky, p. 15.

⁷⁷King, "All Is," p. 50.

⁷⁸Van Gelder, p. 69.

⁷⁹"Demonstration," pp. 44, 46; Donovan, p. 597; King, "All Is," pp. 51, 54.

⁸⁰King, "All Is," pp. 55-56; Epstein, p. 163.

⁸¹Linton, "With Mourning," p. 35.

⁸²King, "All Is," pp. 56, 58-60; Alonso, pp. 248-249.

⁸³King, "All Is," pp. 62-63.

⁸⁴Epstein, p. 163.

⁸⁵King, "If I Can't Dance," p. 284.

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 284, 285, 288.

⁸⁷"Unity Statement," pp. 15-19.

⁸⁸Ynestra King and Donna Gould, "Structure and Decision-making for Regional Women's Pentagon Action Groups," in "Campaigning Notes 1: Networking, and Working in Groups," in Keeping the Peace: A Women's Peace Handbook 1, ed. Lynne Jones (London: Women's Press, 1983), pp. 131-132; King, "If I Can't Dance," p. 286.

⁸⁹Alonso, p. 254.

⁹⁰King, "If I Can't Dance," pp. 286, 288.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 289.

⁹²Alonso, p. 254.

⁹³Epstein, pp. 161, 180-181; Van Gelder, p. 69.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER THREE

¹Vandana Shiva, Interview by Judith Bizot, UNESCO Courier (March 1992), p. 9.

²Ynestra King, "Toward an Ecological Feminism and a Feminist Ecology," in Machina Ex Dea: Feminist Perspectives on Technology, ed. Joan Rothschild (New York: Pergamon, 1983), p. 125.

³Wangari Maathai, The Green Belt Movement: Sharing the Approach and the Experience (Nairobi, Kenya: Environmental Liason Centre International, 1988), p. 65; Aubrey Wallace, "Sowing Seeds of Hope: Wangari Maathai, Kenya," in Eco-Heroes (San Francisco: Mercury, 1993), pp. 10-11.

⁴Wallace, pp. 10-12.

⁵Ibid., pp. 11-12.

⁶Wallace, pp. 13-14.

⁷"Campaigner Arrested," New Scientist, (18 Jan. 1992), p. 12.

⁸Wallace, p. 21.

⁹Wangari Maathai, "Foresters Without Diplomas," Ms. 1.5 (March-April 1991), p. 74. The essentialism in Maathai's view of women and nature will be discussed later.

¹⁰Wangari Maathai, Interview by Maggie Jones, "Greening the Desert," in Reclaim the Earth: Women Speak Out For Life On Earth, ed. Leonie Caldecott and Stephanie Leland (London: Women's Press, 1983) p. 112.

¹¹Maldevelopment is the most common kind of development today: the kind that in the long run disempowers people, harms the environment, causes poverty and sometimes leads to violence.

¹²Maathai, "Foresters," p. 74. Wallace, p. 5; Maathai, GBM, pp. 1, 21-22.

¹³Maathai, GBM, pp. 16, 24.

¹⁴Wallace, p. 6.

¹⁵Maathai, GBM, pp. 2-3, 12, 14, 17.

¹⁶Maathai, "Foresters," p. 74.

¹⁷Vandana Shiva, Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development (London: Zed, 1988), cover page about the author. Mira Shiva and Vandana Shiva, "Population and Environment," Women and Environments 14.3-4 (Winter-Spring 1993) p. 21. Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism, ed. Judith Plant (Philadelphia: New Society, 1989), p. 259. Vandana Shiva, interview with Bizot, p. 9.

¹⁸Vandana Shiva, "Development as a New Project of Western Patriarchy," in Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism, ed. Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1990), p. 193.

¹⁹Vandana Shiva, "Women, Ecology and Health: Rebuilding Connections" in Close to Home, ed. Vandana Shiva (Philadelphia: New Society, 1994), p. 1.

²⁰Shiva, Staying Alive, p. 42.

²¹Shiva, "Women, Ecology and Health," p. 4

²²Vandana Shiva, "Viewpoint: The Balance of Power," Environmental Action 24.2 (Summer 1992), p. 21; Shiva, Staying Alive, pp. 21, 46-47.

²³Shiva, Staying Alive, pp. xiv, 2, 15.

²⁴Ibid., p. 22. Shiva's critique of science is similar to the earlier work of Carolyn Merchant.

²⁵Vandana Shiva, "Development, Ecology and Women" in Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism, cited above, pp. 89-90.

²⁶Shiva, Staying Alive, pp. 4-5.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 220-221.

²⁸Vandana Shiva, Note that Shiva distinguishes between dualism and true dichotomy. Dualism takes two things, such as women and men, nature and culture, which can be seen as complementary, separates them, and gives greater value to one. The true dichotomy she cites here describes two mutually exclusive possibilities--not to things that can be understood as complementary.

²⁹Vandana Shiva, "The Green Revolution in the Punjab," The Ecologist 21.2 (1991); Vandana Shiva, The Violence of the Green Revolution (London: Zed, 1992). Shiva, Staying Alive.

³⁰Vandana Shiva, "The Seed and the Earth: Women, Ecology and Biotechnology," The Ecologist 22.1 (1992), pp. 4-7; Vandana Shiva, "The Seed and the Earth: Biotechnology and the Colonisation of Regeneration," in Close To Home, cited above, pp. 128-143.

³¹Shiva, Staying Alive, pp. 10-11.

³²Ibid., p. 23.

³³Shiva, "Women, Ecology and Health," pp. 1-2.

³⁴Shiva and Shiva, "Population," pp. 20-21.

³⁵Shiva, Staying Alive, p. 52.

³⁶Shiva, "Viewpoint," p. 21.

³⁷Shiva, Staying Alive, p. 40.

³⁸Ibid. Although Shiva tries to avoid essentialism here, her repeated use of the term "feminine principle" defeats that attempt, as will be discussed below.

³⁹Shiva, Staying Alive, p. 37.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 224.

⁴¹In the "Foreword" to Staying Alive, page xii, Rajni Kothari notes this problem in Shiva's work.

⁴²Ynestra King, "What is Ecofeminism," The Nation (12 Dec. 1987), p. 702.

⁴³Ynestra King, "All is Connectedness," in Keeping the Peace: A Women's Peace Handbook 1, ed. Lynne Jones (London: Women's Press, 1983), p. 40 ff.

⁴⁴Rocking the Ship of State: Toward a Feminist Peace Politics, ed. Adrienne Harris and Ynestra King (Boulder: Westview, 1989), p. 299.

⁴⁵King, "The Ecology of Feminism and the Feminism of Ecology," in Healing the Wounds, cited above, p. 118.

⁴⁶Ynestra King, "Healing the Wounds: Feminism, Ecology and Nature/Culture Dualism," in Gender/Body/Knowledge, ed. Alison Jagger and Susan Bordo (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1989), p. 115.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 107.

⁴⁸I do not assume that valuing the giving of life and a woman's right to choose abortion are mutually exclusive, but King's position would be stronger if she explained how they fit together in her theory.

⁴⁹Ynestra King, "The Eco-feminist Imperative," in Reclaim the Earth, cited above, p. 10; King, "Toward an Ecological Feminism," p. 123.

⁵⁰King, "Healing the Wounds," in Gender, cited above, p. 130.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 134.

⁵²Ynestra King, "Feminism and the Revolt of Nature," Heresies 4.1 (#18 Feminism and Ecology 1981), p. 14; King, "Healing the Wounds," Gender, p. 131.

⁵³King, "Healing the Wounds," Gender, pp 128, 132.

⁵⁴A problem with King's complete rejection of the concept of hierarchy is discussed below.

⁵⁵Ynestra King, "The Ecology of Feminism" in Healing the Wounds, pp. 19-20.

⁵⁶King, "Toward an Ecological Feminism," p. 125; King, "Eco-feminist Imperative," p. 10.

⁵⁷King, "What is Ecofeminism?" p. 702; King, "Eco-feminist Imperative," p. 11.

⁵⁸Ynestra King, "If I Can't Dance In Your Revolution, I'm Not Coming," in Rocking the Ship of State, cited above, p. 284. King, "Feminism and the Revolt," p. 14; King, "What is Ecofeminism?" p. 702.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER FOUR

¹Ynestra King, "Healing the Wounds: Feminism, Ecology and Nature/Culture Dualism," in Gender/Body/Knowledge, ed. Alison Jagger and Susan Bordo (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1989), pp. 123, 132; Karen Warren, "The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism," Environmental Ethics 12.2 (1990), pp. 127-132; Karen Warren, "Feminism and Ecology: Making Connections," Environmental Ethics 9 (Spring 1987), p 18.

²Stephanie Lahar makes a similar observation: that to try to understand the links between different forms of oppression so that work for liberation in one area will contribute to liberation in other areas is more productive than to search for the earliest seed of domination. Stephanie Lahar, "Ecofeminist Theory and Grassroots Politics," Hypatia 6.1 (Special Issue on Ecological Feminism 1991), p. 34.

³Christine Cuomo describes a similar vision of an ecofeminism that draws on many methods and theories to oppose oppression at many levels and in many places. Christine J. Cuomo, "Unravelling the Problems in Ecofeminism," Environmental Ethics 14.4 (Winter 1992), pp. 362-363.

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APPENDIX A

GREEN BELT MOVEMENT TIME LINE

- 1974 The idea of organized tree-planting to benefit the Langata community in Nairobi is conceived.
- 1976 Maathai attends the UN Conference on Human Settlements in Vancouver and thinks seriously about using the tree-planting idea to improve the lives of the women of Kenya.
- 1977 The Green Belt Movement is born when Maathai, working with the National Women's Council of Kenya, organizes the planting of seven trees in Nairobi on June 5 in observance of World Environment Day.
- 1989 Maathai and others oppose the construction of a sixty-story building in Nairobi's Uhuru Park.
- 1991 Authorities scale down their plans for the building in Uhuru Park and finally abandon the idea.
- 1992 In January Maathai is arrested as a member of the opposition party FORD (Forum for the Restoration of Democracy) which accuses President Moi of planning a coup to avoid the first democratic election since he took office. Upon release she is hospitalized. In November the charges against her are finally dropped. Meanwhile, she joins women protesting for the release of political prisoners and is beaten by police at a hunger strike.
- 1993 By 1993 the Green Belt Movement of Kenya has succeeded in employing fifty thousand women in over one thousand nurseries and has planted ten million seedlings, eighty percent of which have grown to maturity. It has also exported its dream to thirty other African countries.

APPENDIX B

CHIPKO TIME LINE

1731	Bishnoi massacre.
1800's	British government and citizens gain increasing control of Uttar Pradesh forests.
1930-31	Nonviolent protests against commercial exploitation of forests throughout India; unarmed villagers killed in protest in Garhwal.
1960's	Women protest against liquor in Uttar Pradesh.
1960	Chamoli district unskilled and semi-skilled workers form a cooperative in which C.P. Bhatt is active.
1962	Indo-Chinese conflict. Later area opened up to roads, communication, and greater commercial exploitation.
1964	Bhatt and others form the Dasholi Gram Swarajya Mandal (DGSM) to employ local workers.
1970	The Alakanda flood occurs in July.
1971-72	Protests in Gopeshwar, Purola, Uttarkashi, and elsewhere.
1973	Protests in Mandal and Phata succeed. DGSM works again with flood victims, especially women, and its objectives become more ecological.
1974-76	Gaura Devi and other village women protest in the Reni forest. Demonstrations also take place in Garur, Dehradun, Nainital, Kotdwara, and Gopeshwar. Tree felling banned in Reni forest, and the government has to abandon the commercial contract system for felling trees. Bahuguna and women activists participate in foot marches to spread the news of Chipko. DGSM begins its eco-development camps.

- 1977 In May and June meetings are held to organize for future action. Protests in the Adwani forest and at Narendranagar and Salet involve creative protest such as tying sacred threads around trees and even hugging them. In Adwani Bachhni Devi defies her husband to help save the trees, and one woman replies to an angry forest officer, "Yes, we know what forests bear. Soil, water and pure air."
- 1978 Protests in Bhyndar valley, again at Adwani and Narendranagar, in the Budiargarh forest and at Parsari.
- 1980 In February women oppose the men of their own village and lead a protest to save the trees at Dongri Paintoli. Indira Gandhi calls for a fifteen-year ban on commercial felling in Uttar Pradesh.
- 1981-83 Bahuguna makes a 4870 kilometer march from Kashmir to Kohima. Bhatt focuses on the eco-development camps.
- 1983+ Chipko becomes a national movement that is internationally known.

VITA

Latisha Ann Campbell was born in Paris, Texas, on November 2, 1966, the daughter of Dewitta Bass Campbell and Robert Woodfin Campbell. After completing her work at Mt. Vernon High School, Mt. Vernon, Texas, in 1985, she entered Southwestern University at Georgetown, Texas. During the summers of 1986, 1987 and 1988 she participated in social outreach internships in Denton, Texas; Toledo, Ohio and St. Louis, Missouri. She received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Southwestern University in May 1989. The next two years she was employed as a US-2 Missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church and placed at Pace Memorial United Methodist Church in Richmond, Virginia. In August 1991 she entered the graduate program in Justice and Peace Studies at Incarnate Word College.

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